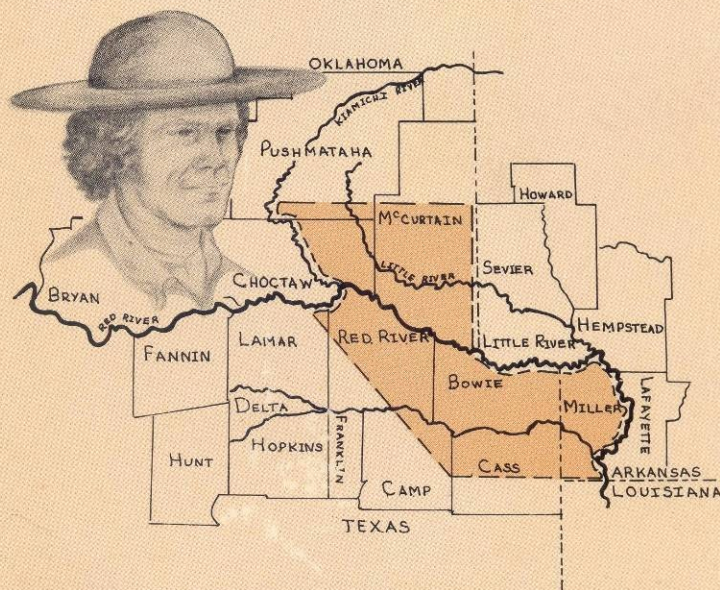


SIX MONTHS from Tennessee

by Skipper Steely



The first written account of the settlers who claimed both Texas and Arkansas their home. The story of Old Miller County, now N. E. Texas and S. E. Oklahoma, from 1816-1830.

SIX MONTHS FROM TENNESSEE

A story of the many pioneers of Miller County, Territory of Arkansas, based upon the life of Claiborne Wright, the most dominant of those who dared to settle in what would become Southeast Oklahoma and Northeast Texas.

By Skipper Steely

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About the Author

Skipper Steely has been interested in the development of the Red River Valley since childhood. Armed with journalistic knowledge, he set out to collect all the possible accounts written on *Old Miller County* as well as records that never had seen the pages of a book. The first of two volumes, (the second named, *Forty-Seven Years*), develops the Red River Valley Anglo-American life from 1816-1830.

Steely grew up in the newspaper business with his family and later received his BS and MS from East Texas State University. The native Parisian (Texas) worked with several weekly newspapers before he published and was part owner of several small papers in Northeast Texas. He later worked for the *Dallas Times-Herald* and the State of Texas before deciding to write the account of *Old Miller County*.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be unfair to even suggest that much of the information contained in this publication was uncovered by this author, when, in fact, very little new background on Claiborne Wright was discovered. The written accounts have been there all along--just never before compiled into one book. The stories have been retold countless times in the past. However, with the passing of grandchildren and great grandchildren, the last decades have not found descendents who have been dramatically interested in the exploits of this pioneer and his many friends and acquaintances.

The Wright family has never been close, so to speak. But during 1981-82, a search for historical documents brought many of them from across the country together with one thought in mind--to place in writing the history of those who comprised Miller County, Territory of Arkansas and the settlements of Clear Creek, Pecan Point, Shawneetown and Jonesborough. At one time this included upwards of 3,700 inhabitants. Today, most of the population of Lamar, Red and Bowie Counties in Texas would not be able to answer any questions on that once large Southwestern Territory of Arkansas entity.

The work of Mary Vivian Daniel, daughter of Emily Brown Wright Daniel, granddaughter of George Wright and great granddaughter of Claiborne, has been invaluable in the construction of this story. Her relentless lifetime work of genealogy on the Wright and related families served as a basic outline for this book. But most of all, the extensive, unpublished work [placed on Kindle 2011] of Dr. Rex W. Strickland has served as the foundation. The amount of material he uncovered while working on his thesis in 1937 for the University of Texas is amazing. And, when it is taken into consideration that he had no *Arkansas Gazette* available on microfilm, no Territory of Arkansas papers in print form, and no copying machines in each research facility, it unfolds as a most remarkable effort. *Six Months From Tennessee* is a paltry effort compared to his manuscript and knowledge. However, Dr. Strickland wrote his paper from the scholarly point of view. I, in an effort to reach all audiences, attempted to put the narrative portion of the book in easy reading form. For those who wish to view it from a research angle, the footnotes are comprehensive and tell a story of their own. They can be studied or not, depending upon the interest of the reader.

Dr. Walter N. Vernon, author of many publications and articles on early Methodism, was tirelessly helpful in the production of the book. His knowledge of William Stevenson, the riding preacher, directed me to many references not otherwise inspected.

Maybe this account of life in Texas before and during Stephen F. Austin, but in a different portion of the state, will lead those further researching the Northeast Texas-Southeast Oklahoma-Southwest Arkansas area down some rather interesting paths. With *Six Months From Tennessee* as a tool, they can find a better and quicker understanding of the type person who formulated the governments of Arkansas and Texas in those early

days.

Acknowledging that some stories are not sourced, this account will still be as near to what really happened as possible, based upon accounts of personalities involved as passed on by the families. There may be points of interest that are not actually footnoted. However, more than likely the events happened, but cannot be minutely documented.

Research has found most of the Wright stories to be relatively true in content. Extremely helpful with such accounts was Edgar Wright, Jr., Laura Howell Youngblood, Kathryn Gothard, Edna Steely, and Merle and Hazel Brazelton--all deceased. Also, George Travis Wright passed on some of his valuable, preserved papers to the Barker Library, University of Texas, Austin [when this book was written other Miller County records had not been yet discovered]. Frances Ragland Tillson was also extremely helpful, for she saved the papers that Miss Daniel sent her. Ruth Rees Milligan and Margaret Hollje opened up their homes to help, as did Elizabeth Harris Smith. All three are gone. And on and on. Everyone asked to help was more than willing.

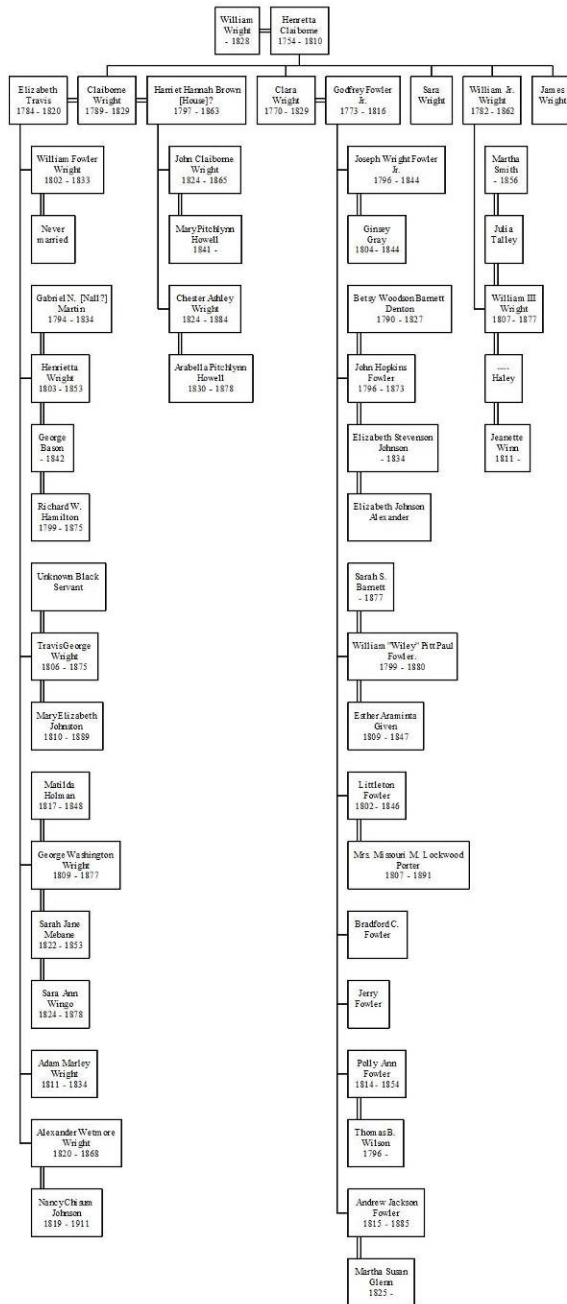
Countless librarians and county court clerks lent a helping hand, with the exception of one--in Carthage, Tennessee! And, one of the most encouraging hands came from East Texas State University history teacher, Joe Fred Cox, who has for years wanted a written account of these events. Hopefully his dream of a life story of George W. Wright, founder of Paris, will come true in the future!

Claiborne Wright, who some feel was the real "Father" of Texas, or at least of Northeast Texas, had sons, nephews, friends and enemies who were most instrumental in the creation of "law and order" in a portion of the wilderness that would not see civilized affairs until the late 1830s.

This piece of work is not meant to replace the importance of the movement Austin brought to Texas, but to act as a supplement to Texas history, reminding those who study the state's most fascinating events, that there was life in Texas before the arrival of Stephen F. Austin! In fact, these Red River pioneers formed most of what became Austin's Colony.

Last, but most importantly, the assistance in research and the many hours of listening to the subject of *Six Months From Tennessee* by Marsha Mankin Kraft [Stuart] cannot be ignored, nor can the efforts of Jane Steely for her tedious review of the material. Without their help and interest in the book, it would have never made it to publication! Appreciation goes also to those at Henington Publishing Company who put up with this and several Wright Press publications in the 1980s.

Descendants of William Wright

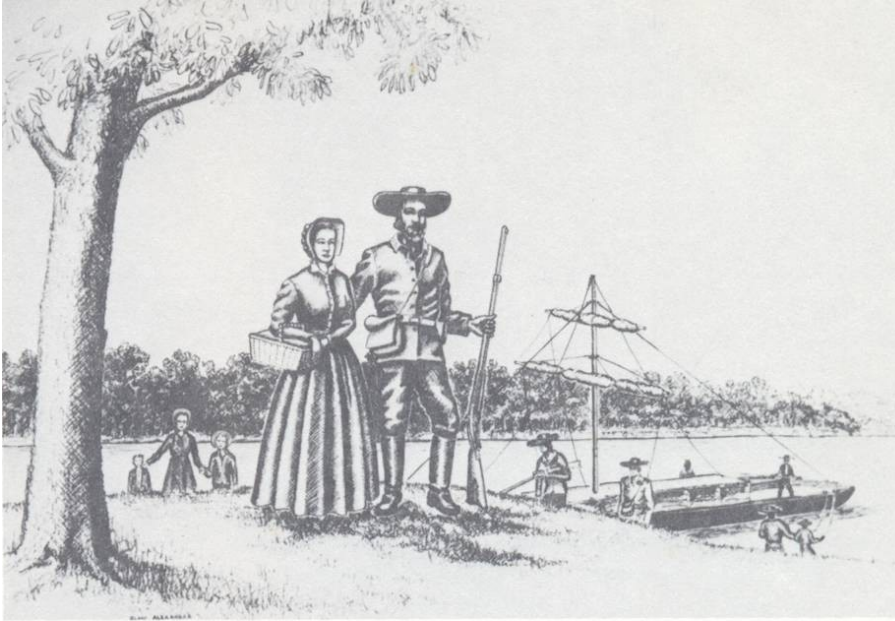


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Drawn For Mary Vivian Daniel
By Blake Alexander

Proofread by Anna Oates Pope Matthews
Maps Drawn by Ann Tschoerner



Skipper Steely
(Photo By Ginger Cook)

Six Months From Tennessee

1

A Restless Background

The sky was blue. The leaves still clung stubbornly to the trees, awaiting the first storm that would cover the ground with large oak leaf clusters. In all, it was a typically beautiful November day in Northeast Texas. The temperature was a bit nippy, but soon the sun would take care of that. The Wright family clearly had chosen the correct time to repack the *Pioneer*, their 90-foot keelboat that had carried them to Texas from Tennessee.

When the family had arrived at Colonel William Mabbit's trading post on September 5, 1816,¹ only the father, Claiborne, and the three male slaves, Jeff, Ben and Hardy, had escaped the malaria fever.² But now all were well and ready to move up the Red River in search of their own piece of land. The immensity of the area was staggering. Property was virtually theirs to claim wherever they saw fit.

Betty, the mother, Henrietta, their red-headed 13 year-old daughter, and Jin, their maid, had prepared breakfast for Claiborne, the male slaves and the four sons-William Fowler, 15, Travis George, 10, George Washington, 7, and Adam Marley, 5.³ The family then packed the remainder of their gear and started through the woods to the river. The younger boys were out ahead, skipping and singing, having a great time and feeling well after the gruesome trip. They had come from Carthage, Tennessee, down the Cumberland River, which ran in front of their home, into the Ohio, down the Mississippi and then back northwest through the treacherous Red River and the Great Raft.⁴ It had not been all fun, but they were now where they wanted to be-in the wilds along the Red River. The bad times were all behind them, or so they thought!

George was ahead of the group and soon was the first in sight of the riverbed. He stopped in amazement. The *Pioneer* was gone. The family and slaves fanned out to look up and down the river, but with no luck. Jeff, along with Hardy, who was about 16 at the time, dived into the water, searched, then swam across. But there was no sign of the boat, anywhere!

The only explanation was that during the night Indians had slipped in, robbed the boat of its goods, had taken it out to the middle of the river, and sunk the broadhorn. The vessel that Claiborne built back home in Tennessee was extremely waterlogged anyway. It would have taken little effort to assist it to the bottom of the murky Red River.

The disaster, though he failed to reveal his true feelings, outwardly failed to phase Claiborne one way or another. He simply announced that the family would settle at that spot. A temporary

cabin or lean-to was constructed upon a high point. The boys went to Mabbit for tools to cut timbers and start building.⁵

Before they left, however, in his habitual way, Claiborne told a funny story that happened to him while traveling in Illinois two years earlier. This was the longest stretch of time he had been with the children and Betty since they were married. The past, however, prepared him well for the days ahead. Building a home in what would eventually become the Republic of Texas was simple compared to events that had transpired during the past few years.

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Claiborne never was really a settled person.⁶ Farming kept him occupied after moving to Carthage, but soon he became restless. After a few years, travels on the Cumberland River began to stretch between Carthage and Princeton, Kentucky, to visit his sister Clara, and her husband, Godfrey Fowler. They lived near Carthage, on the west end of Smith County, near Dixon's Springs, until 1806. Later, Claiborne's business ventures and curiosity took him as far as Louisville, Kentucky, where his father, William, and later his brother, James, resided. On these trips down the Cumberland, through Nashville, past Clarksville, on to Smithland and into the Ohio River, Claiborne carried goods and merchandise for friends and customers in his keelboat.⁷

Then, growing "hard" to protect himself from the elements dictated by both weather and man, Claiborne even began to attract a bit of trouble, not unusual for a man so large and strong-willed.⁸ On March 7, 1808, a bill of indictment was returned against Claiborne and his brother, James, along with Andrews Metcalf and Willie Sullivan, for inciting a riot in Carthage.⁹ A similar charge was filed against Moses Canaday. The charges were brought by Jacob Kennedy, Sr. on behalf of Jessie Kennedy, stating the five were guilty of trespassing, assault and battery.¹⁰ Three days later a jury comprised of Moses Grissom, Melton Young, Jessie Smith, Joel Holland, Joel Dyer, Adam Dale, Willoughby Pew, John Lyon, Thomas Wilkerson, Arch Wilkerson, Edmund Jennings and David Rowland found Claiborne "guilty of the affray" and fined him \$5 and the cost of the trial. The others were also found guilty but fined only \$1, indicating the jury thought the affair was not so serious.¹¹ Moses Canaday pleaded not guilty and was discharged by the court.¹²

Perhaps this was the first leadership role Claiborne recorded for posterity!

Despite his troubles with the law, Claiborne served on the jury of Smith County himself during the same year.¹³ He also was present on September 8, 1808 during the Isham Beasley v. James Sullivan case. Claiborne and William Sullivan, the father of James, promised the court they would see that the defendant satisfied the judgment, or they would do it for him.¹⁴

The Jessie Kennedy case was not over as far as Claiborne and the three involved were concerned. On March 3, 1809, they were granted an appeal to the decision.¹⁵ The case was apparently dropped, however, and the decision accepted.¹⁶ In the meantime,

Claiborne Wright continued his work, his travels and the quest to find his destiny.

In late 1811, Claiborne was visiting his father near Louisville.¹⁷ William had moved there after Henrietta's death a year earlier in North Carolina. This particular visit put Claiborne in the position to participate in one of the most historical events of the nineteenth century.

During 1810, Robert Fulton and Robert L. Livingston, partners in the steamboat business, had been encouraging Nicholas J. Roosevelt to work for them, piloting their large steamboat from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. The boat would be named simply, *The New Orleans*.¹⁸

Roosevelt and his young wife, Lydia, spent a portion of 1809 charting and surveying the route, which would pass by Louisville a little before the halfway point of the trip.¹⁹

Fulton and Livingston finally acquired exclusive rights to transact business on the Lower Mississippi River.²⁰ They had not met as much success in their efforts to do the same on the Ohio and other eastern rivers. The pair hoped that the triumphant voyage of the *New Orleans* would discourage any competition, anyway.²¹

On October 20, 1811, the water finally rose high enough to begin the voyage. Hats were thrown high, cheers vented into the air as the vessel, a side-wheeler of 371 tons, "rounded off" and drifted out into the Ohio.²² Moving at a rate of 8-10 knots per hour, she disappeared behind the first bend. History was being made. The *New Orleans* would never see Pittsburgh again-but that was by design, not accident.

Without mishap, the *New Orleans* reached Cincinnati, where for lack of a levee, she anchored in mid-stream.²³ The townspeople turned out in droves. Friends clambered aboard, reminding Roosevelt that in his earlier visit he said he would return in the steamboat.²⁴

The Captain had returned to Pittsburgh in 1810 after that

¹⁷ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 7. A search of the Louisville (Jefferson County) land records found a William Wright of Clark County, Indiana, a county just over the river from Louisville. William Wright bought a lot on June 16, 1827, in Louisville, for \$2,000. See Jefferson County *Deed Book BB*, 292. *Deed Book Y*, 194, says an indenture was made on April 3, 1826, between Joseph Middleton and William Wright of Shippingport, Jefferson County. Shippingport was the dock area on the south side. Carl Kramer, a local professor in Clark County, said in interview that he knew of no Shippingport, Indiana, only of the one on the Kentucky side. A William Wright of Clark County, Indiana did die on August 8, 1828, leaving a widow named Amy. A partner, William Smith, and Amy, were made administrators for the estate. See Dorothy Riker, *Early Clark County Will And Executor's Records And Clark County Marriage Records* (Jeffersonville, 1936), 23. But back in Jefferson County, Kentucky, *Deed Book GG*, 106-108, gives an account of James Wright of Clark County, Indiana, on June 3, 1831. He makes arrangements to sell lots to cover debts against the estate. Levi Tyler had a note made with William Wright of \$64.75, made on July 13, 1825, and Edward Tyler filed a claim for a note of \$80 made by the estate on November 1, 1829, after William had supposedly died. The lots were part of the 1826 Middleton-William Wright transaction for lot No. 161, a size of 25' fronting on Front Street and being 72' deep. The Tylers split the lot in return for release of the debts. There are many other William Wrights listed, but these transactions were most likely to be ones made by Claiborne Wright's father and brother, James.

exploration trip but did not commence construction of the Fulton-designed ship until the Spring of 1811. He built it under Boyd's Bluff on the Monongahela River at the Beelen Iron Foundry. The hull was constructed of native white pine. The copper boiler was made in New York. The engine was a Boulton and Watt with a 34-inch cylinder diameter. The motor was powerful, strong and heavy.²⁵

The power plant installed would do right now but later would be replaced. Despite the weight, the ship had a hull depth of only 12 feet.²⁶ This size later made it impractical to run the Louisville to Pittsburgh route, but it served well from New Orleans to Natchez on the deeper Mississippi River.

The *New Orleans*, no doubt, was a magnificent sight!

Captain Roosevelt, Lydia, Andrew Jack, the pilot, an engineer named Nicholas Baker, six hands, two female servants, a man waiter, a cook and the large dog, *Tiger*, stayed in Cincinnati for two days, taking on more wood for fuel.²⁷

As they pulled out of town, the mayor shouted, "You may go down the river but as to coming up it, the very idea is absurd!" Roosevelt smiled and waved goodbye. He would be back up more quickly than he planned.²⁸

At midnight of the fourth day, October 28, 141 miles out of Cincinnati, the *New Orleans*, under a full moon, dropped anchor opposite Louisville, a town of 1,400 population.²⁹

Claiborne was asleep in his father's home in nearby Shipping Port when the roar of escaping steam caused him and sleeping inhabitants to spring to their feet. They rushed down to the river to see if perhaps the comet that had frequented the sky for several nights had fallen into the Ohio.³⁰

Claiborne, by chance, had met Roosevelt earlier in Kentucky and knew soon what the commotion was all about.³¹ He, along with many others, offered their congratulations the next morning. Many gave their "accompanying regrets that it was the first and last time a steamboat would be seen above the falls of the Ohio."³²

Despite skepticism, the town feasted and gave a large party for the Captain and his wife, including the crew. *Tiger* was not invited!

Not to be outdone, Roosevelt had a plan to convince his onlookers and friends that the boat would travel upstream, easily and reliably. He gave a return dinner. After the leading residents of Louisville sat down to the first of many later famous steamboat dinners, and in the midst of their enjoyment, a strange rumbling of the boat accompanied its perceptible motion. At first, most thought the ship had ripped from its anchor and was headed for the falls.³³ To their pleasant surprise, however, the *New Orleans* was steaming upstream! After a few hours, Roosevelt, proving his point, returned from the excursion safely to dock at the foot of what became Fifth Street. Many doubters were changing their feelings about steamboat travel. Still, some needed a drink at Evan William's distillery on the way home!³⁴

Claiborne Wright was so impressed that he asked his friend if he could finish the trip with the *New Orleans* so that he could

meet and visit with his cousins, Ferdinand Leigh Claiborne in Natchez, and William Charles Cole Claiborne, governor of the Territory of Orleans.³⁵ The relationship of Claiborne to the governor most assuredly weighed heavily on the decision to allow passage. Basically the *New Orleans* was empty of passengers, for few really believed the boat could safely run the river ahead.³⁶

Because of the low level of the river, the falls were impassable at this time. Therefore, Roosevelt returned to Cincinnati to dispel the pessimism that city's leadership had expressed earlier regarding the future of the steamboat.

Several trial runs upstream followed. At one point, the *New Orleans* ran 13 miles in two and one-half hours, "in the presence of a number of 'respectable gentlemen.'"³⁷ The ship's reputation and reliability rose as more and more passengers changed their minds about the use of the steamboat on western rivers.

But it was time to leave as the water level rose in late November. The rather risky descent of the falls was imminent. Just before the start, however, Mrs. Roosevelt gave birth to a child.³⁸ Friends originally had begged her not to travel at all on the voyage, and now she was asked to stay behind with the baby. However, the steamboat was luxurious compared to the small vessels she and her husband used two years before!

So, when the big day arrived, December 8, 1811, all were aboard, including Claiborne Wright. An experienced rapids pilot also was on board to assist.³⁹ He took his place next to Jack, the pilot. Claiborne stood out on the bow, using a system of hand signals. He and the pilot knew the noise would be too loud to understand instructions by voice.

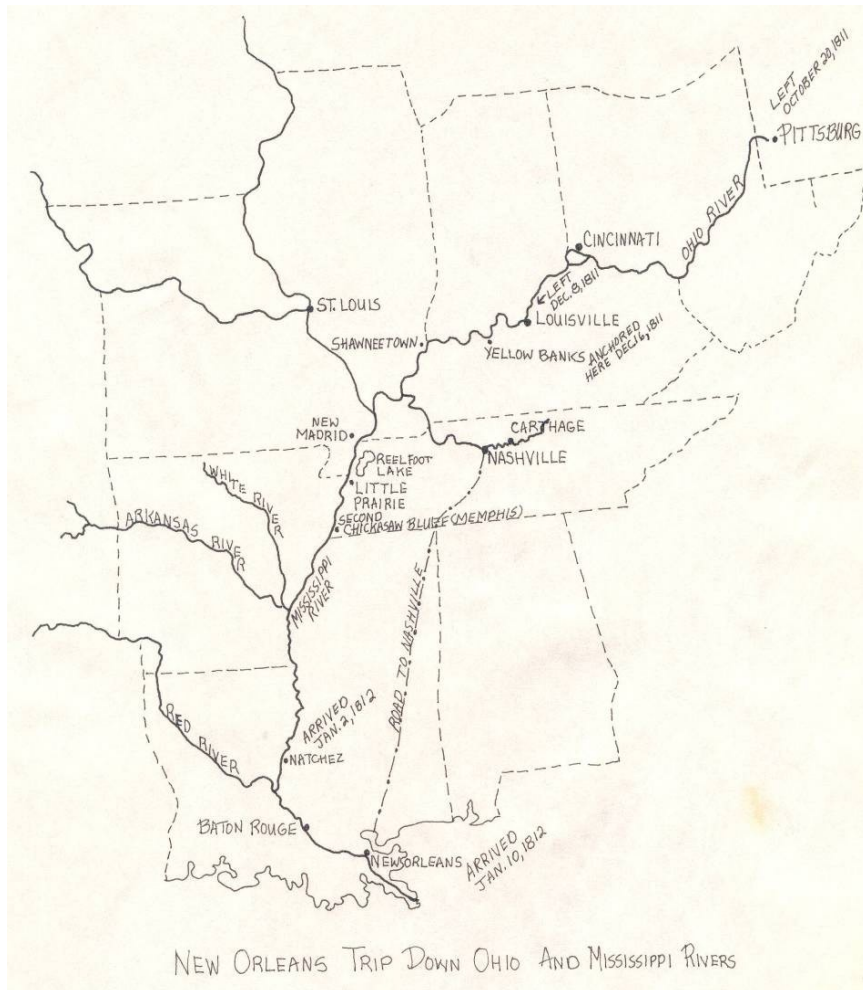
Steam was crowded into the boiler to speed the boat, allowing easier guidance through the rough waters. Everyone grabbed onto something solid! The *New Orleans* swung wide into the Indian Channel and headed to the falls. Despite the pitch and sway, the ship made it through safely and rounded below the falls to depart the pilot. He was paid \$2 for his efforts.⁴⁰ They then bid goodbye and headed on toward even more spectacular events.

Roosevelt promised "plain sailing" after the falls, but a most unusual calamity awaited the *New Orleans* as she churned toward the Mississippi River. As the boat lay at anchor one evening at Yellow Banks, Claiborne and the crew felt the cable shake. The swaying of the boat began to make some aboard experience a "nausea resembling sea sickness."⁴¹ Throughout the entire night the shocks continued but it was some time before the realization of an earthquake struck home:

"When the *New Orleans* resumed her journey the next morning the machinery prevented those aboard from noting any disturbance-this is, all save *Tiger*, who 'prowled about, moaning and growling' whenever he seemed aware of the shocks."⁴²

As the *New Orleans* traveled toward the small village of New Madrid (Mad' rid), Missouri, the Mississippi River became a raging flood with water covering the bottom lands. To add to their fear, a group of Chickasaw Indians took out after the boat in a canoe, only to see Captain Roosevelt gather steam and outrun

them.⁴³ The Indians probably thought the strange vessel partially caused the calamity that shook the ground!



Jittery already, the crew was awakened one night with screams of "fire" in the forward cabin.⁴⁴ Luckily flames were quickly dashed allowing the *New Orleans* to travel on. Its passengers viewed the horror of the disaster, especially when they would go ashore to gather fuel each afternoon. However, the ship was still many miles from the heaviest damage caused by the quake.

The initial shaking had begun about 2 a.m. on the day of December 16, 1811.⁴⁵ New Madrid was located on a bow in the Mississippi near the Kentucky-Tennessee border on the west side of the river in Missouri. Although the epicenter of the quake was thought to be at New Madrid, it actually was about 65 miles due south where naturalist John Bradbury had moored near the Devil's Race Ground, a treacherous channel on the river.⁴⁶

"Bradbury was awakened from a sound sleep about two in the morning by a 'most tremendous noise.' Before he could orient himself the boat gave a sudden unsettling lurch, as if it had been lifted from the water and dropped abruptly. Once on deck

he found that the river was turbulent; although the boat was still moored, 'all nature seemed running in chaos.'⁴⁷

New Madrid was an old town, for that area, founded in 1789 by Colonel George Morgan, a prominent patriot of the American Revolution.⁴⁸ But it was never a major settlement of note, then nor today, its fame coming mainly from the tremendous disaster it suffered during 1811 and 1812. Over 1,800 tremors shook the area, three being of very large proportion.⁴⁹ Many descriptions of its day of reckoning are published, but one written to a friend in Kentucky does an adequate job of summing up the events:

About 2 o'clock this morning we were awakened by a most tremendous noise, while the house danced about and seemed as if it would fall on our heads. I soon conjectured the cause of our troubles, and cried out it was an Earthquake. . . The shock was soon over and no injury was sustained, except the loss of the chimney. . . At the time of the shock, the heavens were very clear and serene, not a breath of air stirring; but in five minutes it became very dark. . . the darkness continued 'til daybreak; during this time we had EIGHT more shocks, none of them so violent as the first.

At half past 6 o'clock in the morning it cleared up, and believing the danger over, I left home to see what injury my neighbors had sustained. A few minutes later there was another shock, extremely violent. . . the houses shook very much-the motion of the earth was about twelve inches to and fro-the darkness returned and the noise was remarkably loud."⁵⁰

The same letter stated that by December 28, sixty-seven shocks had been recorded in the town. "I have heard of no white person being lost as yet-Seven Indians were swallowed up; one of them escaped. . . The Indian says the Shawnee Prophet has caused the Earthquake, to destroy the whites."⁵¹

Newspaper accounts across the country revealed the panic of inhabitants. One writer to the *Kentucky Gazette* said, ". . . I am fearful when I arrive at Natchez to hear the whole city of Orleans is entirely demolished, and perhaps sunk."⁵² On December 24, the *Gazette* editor wrote that the earthquake had inflicted damage in every part of the country. "In the neighborhood of Nashville some chimnies were thrown down, at Louisville it broke off some chimnies." He went so far as to believe that "it is conjectured by some that a volcano has been formed on the waters of the Ohio from the appearance of bitumen floating past Limestone."⁵³ Luckily, the situation was not that desperate!

On board the *New Orleans* Claiborne could see trees swaying and nodding, without aid of any wind. The Captain decided to stop briefly at New Madrid. The fear of the steamboat was gone now with an even greater fear forcing the evacuation of the area's inhabitants. However, Captain Roosevelt would not take on any passengers this time, nor when he stopped 30 miles down stream at Little Prairie.⁵⁴ The residents of this community had all deserted their homes during the quakes, retreating into the swamps for safety. The only brick chimney in that place was entirely demolished by the shocks.⁵⁵

Caving of the banks of the wide river began to destroy familiar landmarks, causing Roosevelt to finally throw up his

hands in despair. He then simply tried to stay where the current was strongest. Each evening they had to dock to take on wood. Quiet workmen did their job quickly, and the boat went back out to mid-stream to anchor for the night. Evening runs were cancelled as the steamboat passed through the earthquake zone.⁵⁶

One night the island they had used for mooring sank!⁵⁷ The hawser had to be cut to allow the boat to pass on.

These things behind them now, the *New Orleans* crew finally arrived in Natchez, Mississippi on January 2, 1812, having come 2,000 miles in less than 10 days' cruising time.⁵⁸ While here Claiborne found out New Orleans was still intact and took some time to hunt up Leigh Claiborne, who had lived in this pretty settlement since retiring from the army in 1805.⁵⁹

Eight days later the ship would reach the crescent city, after a short delay en route to repair one of her wheels. The Captain declared that even though it had taken a trip of 82 days to reach the destination, only 10 days and 19 hours of running time were consumed.⁶⁰ Governor Claiborne wrote Fulton and Livingston of the arrival and the report he read of the trip.⁶¹

Although Claiborne Wright would remain in New Orleans just a short time, the ship *New Orleans* would work the Natchez-New Orleans business until 1814, when she snagged a trunk and sank on July 14, two miles above Baton Rouge, ending a colorful and profitable chapter in history.⁶² There would be many more to take her place in the future.

Claiborne had never met his cousin, so a long visit was in order. Claiborne brought the governor news of his brother, Dr. Thomas Claiborne of Nashville. The governor and the doctor had married daughters of William Lewis, but the governor's wife, Eliza, died in 1804. Claiborne Wright and the Claiborne brothers were first cousins, having the same grandparents, Colonel Nathaniel and Jane Cole Claiborne of "Sweet Hall," King William County, Virginia. Governor Claiborne, Leigh and Thomas were sons of Henrietta's brother, William and his wife, Mary Leigh.⁶³

The first time Claiborne Wright had heard of his famous governor cousin was in the newspapers relating Governor Claiborne's duties as a member of the first constitutional convention of Tennessee, in 1796. Later W.C.C. Claiborne was appointed to become the governor of the Mississippi Territory. He served there from 1801-1805 before moving to New Orleans after the Louisiana Purchase. He and his brother, Leigh, had made quite a name for themselves by 1812 and would add to their reputations in the near future, all at a long distance from their native Virginia.

This was not the last time Claiborne Wright would be associated with his cousins. The Creek and British skirmishes would delay future plans for the Wright family. Even though Governor Claiborne urged Wright to come live in New Orleans, it would be five years before Claiborne could gather his family and belongings to head toward the "promised land." In the meantime, Claiborne Wright would change his destination slightly. W.C.C. Claiborne would outlive his soldier brother only by two years, the general dying in 1815 and the governor shortly after he was elected Louisiana's first senator in 1817. Only Claiborne Wright

would live to travel farther west.

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The "itchy foot" that was permanently attached to Claiborne Wright had to wait for awhile before it could head once again down the Mississippi. He returned to his river business in Carthage and to the chores of raising the children and supporting Betty. She and Claiborne first met in 1801 and married on February 2, 1802, in Chester County, located between present-day Charlotte and Columbia, South Carolina.⁶⁴ They remained in that state until about 1804, having one child, Will, born there on December 5, 1802. Betty was pregnant with Henrietta when the couple decided to join many others by leaving the Baptist church.

The pair had been active in the congregation, Claiborne even serving as a messenger for their church.⁶⁵ But the dissension between North and South Carolina Baptists forced many to join the more stable Scotch Presbyterian Church. Betty and Claiborne studied this religion for a short period. The Claiborne Wright children were taught the Bible and the Presbyterian Catechism on their boat trip down the Mississippi and up the Red River to Texas. Their descendents are rather equally divided between the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodists.⁶⁶

Whatever the reason for leaving the South Carolina atmosphere, the 6' 2" Wright would have departed sooner than later anyway, as was his nature.⁶⁷ He could not find what suited him in Virginia, North or South Carolina; so, Tennessee was the next frontier-and there he went with Betty and the young child.

Ironically, after he returned across-land from New Orleans in the Spring of 1812, Claiborne continued to become more attracted to Carthage and Smith County, Tennessee. He did take time out to fight in the Creek War of 1813 and 1814. He joined the Tennessee Volunteers under General Andrew Jackson, who in turn, served under the command of General Thomas Flourney. Later Claiborne joined forces with his cousin, General Claiborne, and took part in a battle that deported Chief William Weatherford on the Alabama River.⁶⁸

Claiborne was at home most of the time between the years of 1813-1815, at least long enough to serve on a couple of juries called in Smith County during those months.⁶⁹ He also faced several court actions. On December 12, 1813, Edward Sullivan proved a bill of sale in court against Claiborne, and it was ordered to be registered.⁷⁰ Two months later, on February 17, 1814, he was again in court. This time the decision cost him \$689 plus court costs. Apparently he had broken a covenant of some kind with William Sullivan, and even though the old man was dead by now, his heirs carried on the case.⁷¹ It would not be the last time these neighbors would have transactions or court cases with each other!

On the same day in February, 1814, Claiborne registered the sale of Lot No. 24 in Carthage, to Josiah Shaw for \$40.⁷² In a courtroom in May, his friend and nearby neighbor, John Hubbard, had his will proven by the oaths of Claiborne and Judd Strother, another neighbor. Claiborne gave bond for Sally Hubbard and the estate.⁷³ Later, in August, Claiborne was again helpful to Mrs.

Hubbard and her son, Peter. He witnessed letters of administration for the estate.⁷⁴

Claiborne was still having trouble with the Sullivans. In May he had been ordered by the courts to pay another judgment, this time for a total of \$970.25.⁷⁵ This case, or one like it with Willie Sullivan, the old man's son, would drag on until March of 1818, when Claiborne would finally post a win over the contested dispute.⁷⁶ Even though the specific complaints are not listed in the court records, this argument, and others with the Sullivans, most likely had much to do with the duties Claiborne had as a commissioned merchant. He was running farm products, furs and other goods for customers to Nashville and Louisville where he would trade them for other goods and money.⁷⁷

The Courts did not see much of Claiborne Wright in 1815, a year he probably spent much time in partnership with Phillip Trammell at the Salt Works near Shawnee town, Illinois.⁷⁸ But, in 1816, he became active in Carthage again. On February 12, 1816, he bought 207 1/2 acres from William Sullivan for \$1,160. The next day he turned around and sold the land to Sally Hubbard for \$1,400!⁷⁹ Four days later he filed a suit against Willie Sullivan, just before the Wright family made preparations to move.⁸⁰

These suits and the possible failure in the salt works venture were contributing factors in the decision to take a trip west sooner than his wife and family desired. By now the family had grown to five, with the births of Henrietta, Travis, George and Marley. However, a talk with Colonel Mabbit that year while both were in Nashville on business convinced Claiborne that it would be a new adventure, and a solid hope for a future of wealth and satisfaction.⁸¹ The decision to settle near Pecan Point, Texas, was made.

Mabbit had joined Alex and George Wetmore in a trading post venture at Pecan Point, near the Buffalo Crossing of the Red River, the east-west Indian trail through Texas, sometime in 1815.⁸² Mabbit painted such a glowing picture of the North Texas-Red River country that Wright agreed to bring his family there-if he could persuade his wife to go.

Once Wright decided to join Mabbit at Pecan Point, in the Spanish Province of Texas, he had to make up a plan to carry out his decision. No record is left explaining just why he chose the longer keelboat and the water route over the more conventional oxen-drawn wagon, overland journey. Nevertheless, information about the Red River from the files of the Congressional Record and in the press of the time could have influenced his thinking.⁸³

The factors which were uppermost in Wright's mind were simple. He was worried about the safety for his family, their comfort, the expense of the trip, the time it would take, and the feasibility of the various routes considered. Claiborne measured the route and method of travel against these factors and decided the keelboat, by the way of the Cumberland, Ohio, Mississippi and Red Rivers had the most likely probability of success. Moreover, river travel was safer, less arduous and faster although the distance to be traveled by water was greater than the overland route.

Even though boat travel was cheaper, more household goods and food could be transported by water than overland by wagon. Oxen also required fodder and wagons had a tendency to break down. At least five major rivers would have to be crossed by land, including the Mississippi. Claiborne was a river man, anyway, and felt more comfortable and able to cope with problems that might arise on the waterways.

Information obtained by the Dunbar-Hunter Expedition in 1805 covered the Red River from its exit into the Mississippi to the Ouachita River and a short distance up that tributary of the Red. The Freeman-Custis Expedition in 1806 penetrated the channel of the "Big Red" up to Spanish Bluffs, only 20 miles east of Pecan Point. This party was turned back at that point by Spanish troops. The latter exploration used 25-foot, light draft boats.⁸⁴

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Claiborne already knew where the Red flowed into the Mississippi. But the supreme factor that may have influenced his decision was the report of the two expeditions up the Red River, which were ordered by President Thomas Jefferson with the cooperation of Governor Claiborne. If Wright did not have access directly to the reports, it would be plausible that he read about the adventures, which were published widely in the press of that time.

Claiborne decided he could construct a 12 x 60-foot keelboat, take all the family belongings, load supplies to last two years, and make a comfortable trip by water all the way in three months. He did convince Betty, but he underestimated the time!

The children were excited, but Betty only half-heartedly accepted the idea of leaving their 142-acre farm and mill. After her husband used gentle persuasion, she consented. The land was then sold to Samuel R. Anderson.⁸⁵ Claiborne and the three slaves went to work building the boat. It had comfortable cabin quarters, ample storage space, sails for up-river travel and was equipped with locks for towing or cordelling through shallow water.⁸⁶

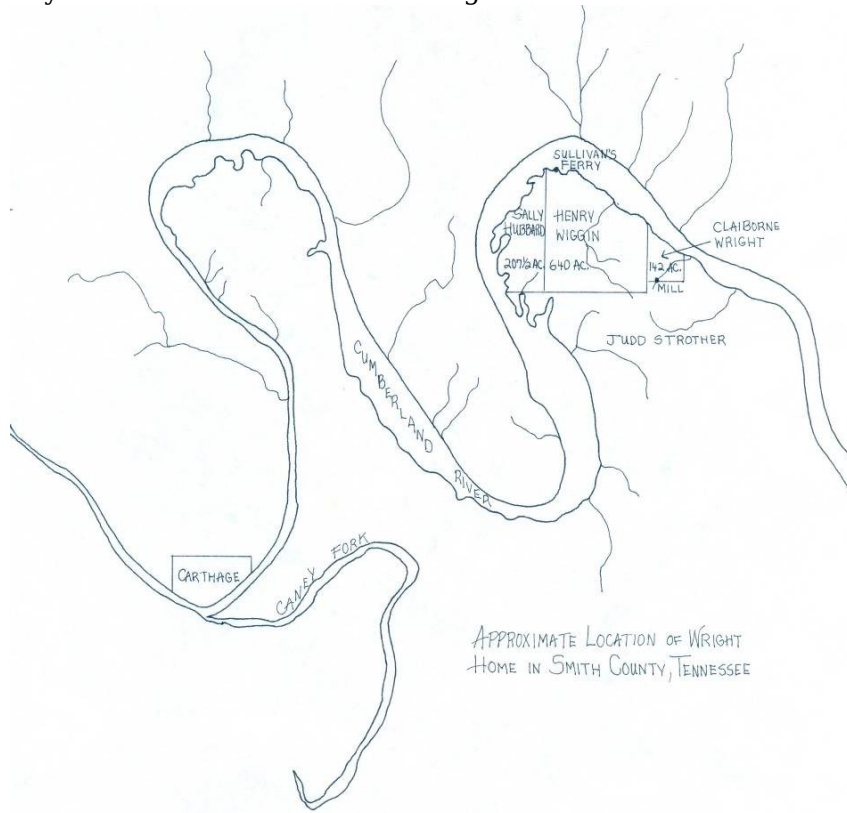
Loading the *Pioneer* began. Supplies were put in watertight kegs and barrels. Money, in \$5 to \$50 amounts, was placed in the bottom of many barrels for safekeeping. Betty and Claiborne would each carry \$500 in a money belt for emergencies.⁸⁷

Even though his suit with Sullivan was dragging on, he would not wait for the results just now. Claiborne hired an agent to represent him before the departure. The court records show that he was also scheduled to be on the jury for the Tooty versus Jeffreys debt payment trial on May 14, 1816, four days after he was to sit on the jury for both the Matthew and Jesse Nickles' cases.⁸⁸

In addition, Claiborne's attorney represented him in the case he was facing against Henry Marsh. Marsh dropped the suit against a debt on August 15, 1816, probably because he assumed he would never see Claiborne Wright again! The judge awarded Claiborne the right to collect his own court costs in the case, but most likely the now former inhabitant of Smith County never was able to make the claim.⁸⁹

On March 5, 1816, Claiborne and the family embarked from

Carthage with the keelboat flying the United States and Tennessee flags.⁹⁰ The journey to Pecan Point was beginning. Most of the family would never see Tennessee again.



2

The Trip To Texas

The trip to Texas had been much more complicated than the Claiborne Wright had originally believed. It left the mental and physical condition of his children and wife in a precarious state.⁹¹ The rest, however, and the friendship of Colonel Mabbitt and the Wetmores, George and Alex, had begun to lift spirits a great deal.

Wright's original estimation that the trip would take only three months was complicated by the stubbornness of The Great Raft, a mass of timbers and undergrowth blocking the Red River for well over 100 miles north of where is now Campti, Louisiana.⁹² The area was once the site of a Coushatta Indian encampment.⁹³ To add to his troubles, the Pascagoula Indian guide Wright hired was many times confused about the route, leading the family directly through the middle of the dark, densely vegetated masses of water that had been backed up in all directions by the dam nature provided.⁹⁴

Just how long The Great Raft had been in existence was unknown.⁹⁵ Indian natives just muttered that it had been blocking up the traditionally wild Red River as long as their ancestors had inhabited the land. One of the earliest documented accounts of this formidable obstacle is in the report filed by Thomas Freeman and his expedition.⁹⁶ Freeman's venture up the Red River to locate its source was ordered by President Thomas Jefferson.

On June 2, 1806, the party of 45 left the settlement of Natchitoches, Louisiana, located on the Cane River. This 40 mile long stream was formed when the main channel of the Red River made one of its famous changes in course after upstream rains had swollen its banks. Freeman, a civilian surveyor, hired Francois "Touline" Grappe to help with the navigation.⁹⁷ The Frenchman had lived almost 30 years among the Caddo Indians and knew the Raft well. In fact, he knew it so well that the flat boat expedition took only 15 days to slip through and around the sections that were almost impassable ten years later when the Wright family, using a large keelboat, attempted to reach Pecan Point.⁹⁸

The expedition had earlier, on June 7, camped on the Hypolite Bordelon Plantation, which in that time was the last outpost of civilization on the Red. A year before Bordelon had purchased land on the northern edge of the small town of Campti.⁹⁹ As late as 1812, a trader by the name of John Maley described the village there as consisting of log houses and fertile gardens.¹⁰⁰ It was south of where Coushatta, Louisiana is today.

The first large raft met the Wrights below that point, at the mouth of the "Coushatty Shoot."¹⁰¹ At that time this was a narrow

bayou overhung with swamp willows, covered with long moss that reached from the top most branches to the water, and in many places "you could not see one hundred yards in mid-day, all was so thick."¹⁰²

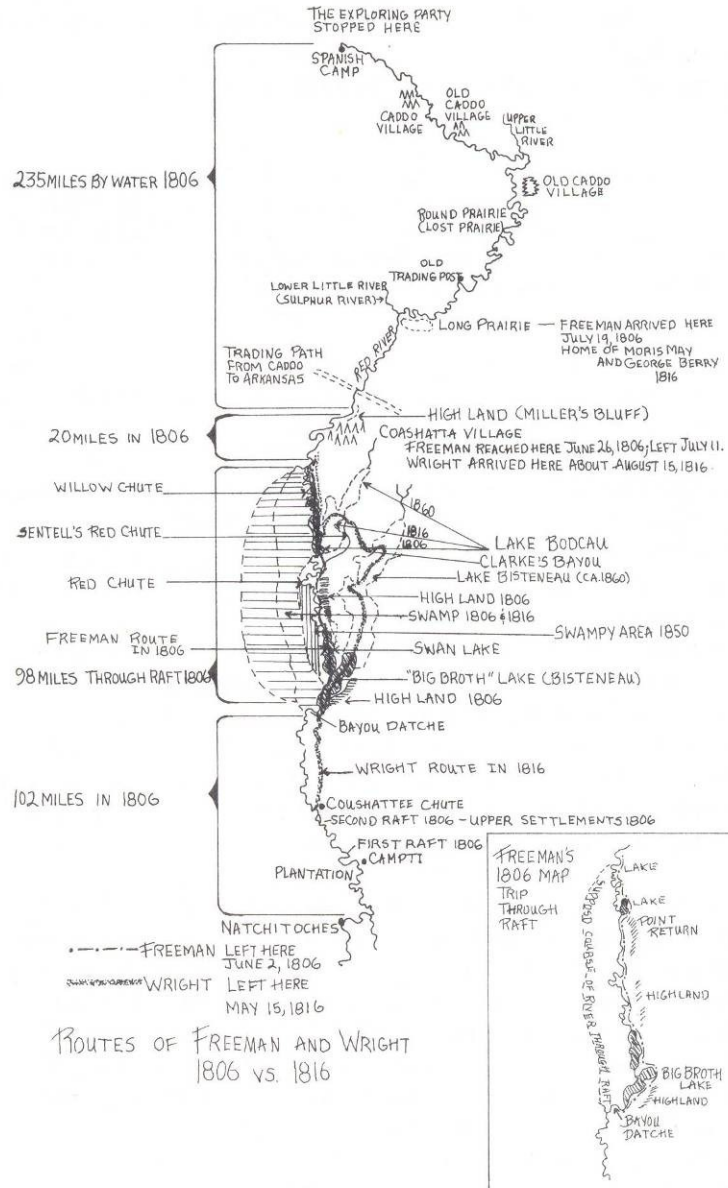
The body of the first raft was approximately a quarter of a mile in length, seemingly as high to the young children aboard! There were cottonwood trees growing a foot thick in diameter in this bed of debris. It took Wright, the Indian pilot, eight hired Indian helpers, the family and slaves five days to clear this mat of drifted timber, according to accounts written by George Wright in later years. He was seven years old at the time the trip was taken.¹⁰³

The Indian guide insisted that this was the route to take, but more than likely he was familiar with only one path through the Raft. It is certain that the Indian was not prepared to assist such a large boat traversing the waterway. Freeman, in 1806, did not encounter the main Raft until some distance farther upstream. He began to detour around the mass of debris during that trip above Coughatta. The expedition left the Red River via a bayou called "Datche" (Dorcheat).¹⁰⁴ Freeman then went into the large "Big Broth Lake," now known as Lake Bisteneau, thus circling to the east of the Raft.

But Wright, according to his son, became the first keelboat man to move through the Raft.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 34.

Map of Freeman's Expedition, 1806, and Wright trip to Texas, 1816, based upon evidence given by George W. Wright, *Trip Through Texas*, 34-38.



Five days after hitting the first snag, the *Pioneer* broke into open water. "Oh, what rejoicing there was among the crew," commented George Wright in his memoirs. They passed up the "Coshatta Shoot" into a large inland sea, or lake, which was "one continuous sheet of water as far as the eye could reach."¹⁰⁶

But going wasn't easy, for it was too dark at night to guide the boat by the stars.

"All seemed lost forever, lost so far as human observation . . . could see. But nothing dented the old man [Claiborne] who had started to pass through and was determined to make a settlement at Pecan Point. So, he pressed on and about the second or third day, he came in sight of land."¹⁰⁷

The group thought at that point they were through the difficulty, probably because the guide was now familiar with the terrain. A stop on land one day to hunt and collect honey heartened the crew and family.

By now the *Pioneer* might have been following the path of Freeman and his party, passing through the Red Chute Bayou, which ran parallel to the Red River. But more than likely the large body of water the Wright's previously saw was the Bisteneau Lake, meaning they were lost at that point, heading too far northeast.

After hunting, the Wrights gathered back on the boat, cut cable and for ten days passed on up a narrow bayou called Bea (sic) Bayou. In many places, according to George Wright, the timber had to be cut out to admit the passage of the keelboat. The area was so flooded that almost no land was to be seen. However, ". . . in many places we could see the tops of the rushes as they projected out of the water a few inches, on what seemed to be the highest ridges. We could see [the ridges] at intervals," wrote George.¹⁰⁸

At this point, the thrill of the trip was gone! When Claiborne had announced to some friends at Natchitoches back in the spring that he was going through The Great Raft, they laughed and said, "Impossible! No boat can go through the great logjam. The Red River is blocked for over 100 miles. . . ." In his way, Claiborne probably replied, "If I can't see a way through, I'll make one!"¹⁰⁹ They were right, to some extent. The grind of the trip, the tension and the lack of a home were taking their toll. The children were not in good spirits and Travis had signs of fever.¹¹⁰

The *Pioneer* anchored in mid-stream at night for safety, but swarming mosquitoes, hissing snakes under the logs, alligators moving around, the musky smell of the scary animals as they were pushed away from the boat, and the howls of the wolves at night were not allowing the family enough time to relax and rest. Even Claiborne's jokes failed to amuse!

But there was no choice now--they must push on. "We finally reached another immense body of open water but no land," commented George in his writings, completed between 1860 and 1870.¹¹¹ Again, the Wrights were apparently too far east in the area now called Bodcau Bayou Reservoir. The Raft was placing a huge amount of acreage under water at that time, confusing the Indian guide.

Grappe, Freeman's guide, had led that party out of this area through a small passage called Willow Chute, carrying them above the Raft.¹¹² The Wright family finally found land after veering back west. For two days they rested, hunted and fished. Then, they apparently let the boat flow into Willow Chute, too.

"The undergrowth was so high at the entrance that we were detained for some time cutting the brush to enable us to enter the bayou. We finally passed into the channel and found a

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 9. Myrtle Murray, "Claiborne Wright-Pioneer Of The Red River District," *Progressive Farmer* (March, 1960), 31.

¹¹⁰ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 11.

¹¹¹ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 35. This was probably what is Lake Bodcau, but then a large swamp.

great deal offallen timber to be cut out of the way. . . we pressed on through all kinds of difficulties. It is impossible for the imagination of man to conceive.¹¹³

For three months this trip through The Great Raft tested the energies and health of all. The family was mentally depressed with only the desire to find Pecan Point keeping them from falling into deep despair.

The beginning of the trip now seemed far in the past. When the *Pioneer*, with its ample quarters, set sail back on March 5, the trip through the Cumberland River via Nashville and Clarksville, Tennessee was very pleasant. Friends met them along the way and wished them luck and happiness. Then, a stop near Princeton, Kentucky to see the Fowlers highlighted the trip.¹¹⁴ Down the Ohio to Cairo, and then to the Mississippi, the *Pioneer* drifted with no troubles.

The trip was relaxing then, with interesting sights greeting them all along the way, until Louisiana was reached. Here they passed cane breaks on one bank, weird old trees along the other, their branches hanging with gray moss, bending over like bewhiskered old men.¹¹⁵ It was very disturbing to the children, but they would face more fierce obstacles later!

Frogs croaked in the evening, much less frightening than the alligators later, but nonetheless, they hampered the rest the children vitally needed. Then the Red River appeared!

The sun came out, the sails were unfurled and the *Pioneer* sailed gently past little villages and towns, at last reaching Natchitoches where a stopover with old friends cheered everyone.¹¹⁶



That visit at Natchitoches now seemed in the distant past, too. Relief from the swamp was imperative. Everyone, with the exception of Claiborne and the slaves, was sick after over two months in the Raft.

The head of Willow Chute was reached none too soon, but here the current became hard to navigate. It was so strong that it had drifted timber far above the banks of the river. "I think that the body of timber was at least 10 feet higher than the water in many places," George wrote.¹¹⁷

"As well as I can recollect, in about 10 days the boat floated in the main channel of the Red River! All was joy. Here we spent several days to rest and wash, as there had been no washing done for some weeks."¹¹⁸

The Wrights had been on the water since leaving Natchitoches on May 15, 1816. It was now mid-August, hot and humid on the Red. They had taken a route up the River that was many more miles out of the way than had the Freeman Expedition in 1806. In fact, Freeman's detour from the main channel was only 98 miles. He returned to the Red River two months quicker than the Wrights did in 1816.¹¹⁹

Freeman was greeted just above present-day Shreveport by a region that was a "delightful wilderness, swarming with deer, black bears, wild turkeys and small game of every kind. There

were handsome groves of cottonwoods canopied over the banks of the Red. . . a large prairie, soon to be known as Caddo Prairie, stretched alongside the river for miles."¹²⁰

On June 26, 1806, a little over a week after clearing through the Raft, Freeman, accompanied by Dr. Peter Custis, a young Philadelphia scientist, and the explorers arrived at a Coushatta Indian village located on a bluff on the east side of the river.¹²¹ That particular village had been constructed three years earlier.

The scenery encouraged the Wrights, too, as they passed up the river, clear of the Raft. George, in particular, was glad to be free of the wilderness they had encountered:

"To look back and just imagine all the meandering that had been made and it did really seem to have been impossible to have made all those turns and have got safely through into the River again. It was one continuous chain of bayous and Lakes from the time that we left the River at Coshatto shoot until we passed out of the Last Willow shoot into the main River.

There was one Lake I recollect where all the fowls seemed to have congregated to raise their young. The Lake was skirted on the north by an immense thicket so dense that the fowls could build almost in one solid bed of nest in the brush. Really, I thought that the aligators had become so thick that the boat could scarcely pass through them . . . young fowls would occasionally tumble overboard [from their nest] and an aligator would seize upon it and devour it. . . I think we must have got a barel of eggs at that place!"¹²²

After several days of sailing up the Red, the Wrights reached the same Couchatta village Freeman visited ten years earlier.¹²³ All the hardships of the trip would climax here. The seemingly friendly Indians greeted the family, slaves and guides, and offered them a nice camping place on shore. But, events at this stop proved "a tolerably hard case after having passed through so many hardships and toil."¹²⁴

As the family was leaving, the Indians seized the cable of the boat, tied her fast and came on board, helping themselves to what they wanted. "It could not be halped," explained George, in retrospect. "We had to submit. After they had taken what they wanted, they offered to pay us for all but had nothing to pay with" that could be of use to the Wrights.¹²⁵

In later years, another story about that event emerged, one not told by George, nor one he would remember:

"Leaving slave Jeff with a gun and one of the dogs to guard the boat, all the party and the Indian helpers walked across a log raft near them and set up camp on shore. The family enjoyed good baths in their tents, then had a good supper, sang songs and Claiborne played his harmonica. Then with the guards arranged, the family slept. Suddenly, about midnight, gunshots and howling dogs announced all was not well on the boat, followed by war whoops signifying robbers on the boat.

Quickly Claiborne, Hardy, Ben and the Indian guide took guns and made for the *Pioneer*, but too late to catch the robber Indians who had killed the dog and tied up Jeff. They made off with many of the most valuable supplies.

Mrs. Wright had her pistol and each of the children had a knife and hatchet, but, still, the robbers escaped."¹²⁶

Whichever version Claiborne was thinking of while building a home near Pecan Point two months later, he remembered that the attack was upsetting to the Indian cordelleroes. They promptly quit!

Claiborne had to spend a week persuading some of the Couchatta's to finish the trip for double pay. He finally succeeded. The faithful guide stayed on also, but only for awhile.¹²⁷ The trip was now through more pleasant waters and terrain.

¹²² Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 37.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, and, Flores, *Red River Valley Review*, IV, No.2, 15. The village was constructed in 1803 on a bluff on the east side of the river, three miles southeast of Gilliam, Louisiana, where Ollie Holm Lake is now located. See also, Dan L. Flores, "Red River Branch Of The Alabama-Couchatta Indians: An Ethnohistory," *Southern Studies*, XVI (Spring, 1977), 55-72.

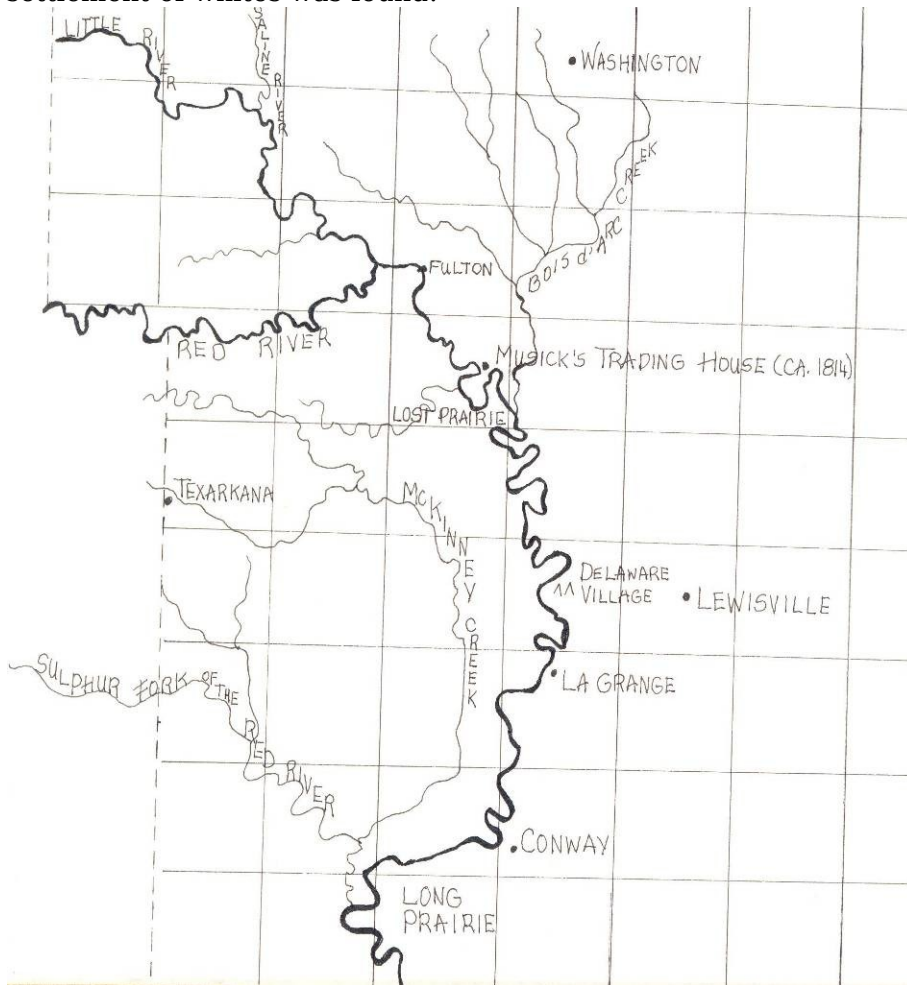
¹²⁴ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 37.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 10.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

The *Pioneer's* inhabitants, with a breath of fresh air, passed on for several days until they came to Long Prairie. Here the first settlement of whites was found!



"An old man by the name of Berry lived there and a man by the name of Moris (sic) May," wrote George about his memories of the place. "I believe they constituted the settlement. We spent several days there and passed on to the Delaware Village. It was about where Lost Prairie is, I think, but on the north bank of the River," he added.¹²⁸ This was near old Bob Musick's trading post.

Buffalo were plentiful on the prairies and sailing was quicker now. The Indian assistance was relieved at the Delaware Village. The boat then proceeded with just the family and slaves. "We passed on but there was no settlement that I can recollect," writes George.¹²⁹

After several weeks on the water, they reached the bend in the Red at what is now Fulton, Arkansas, and turned west toward their destination--Pecan Point. In ten days they would arrive at Colonel Mabbit's post, 1,500 miles away from their former home.

"There was an Indian Trader [Mabbit] and some two or three white families just arrived in the country [overland] but had raised no corn. Here was the long sought home of the [Wright] family amidst a band of Indians, the only companions."¹³⁰

The thoughts about the Indians were deep in George's mind by now. "The family never having seen any except at the Coushatta Village, who had robbed the boat of all that they could find that they wanted-this was enough to prejudice the minds of all against the Indians!" George wrote.¹³¹

It, however, was not as George thought. Claiborne had not discussed his experiences with Indians with his son. His dealings with them were fairly extensive, which probably explains why the family reached Pecan Point alive!

3

Fighting Against Creeks

Indian problems in the Red River country placed no particular fear in Claiborne Wright's mind. His experiences under General Thomas Flournoy against the Creek Indians during the latter part of 1813 taught him that certain methods of combat and negotiations are successful against Indian tactics.¹³² And, after all, he expected, as did Mabbit, the Wetmores and other early arrivals in Texas, that the influx of many more white settlers would force out the few Indians who claimed the area as home.

The incident at Coushatta Bluffs did bring back memories of that winter in Alabama when the Tennessee, Georgia and Mississippi volunteers finally swept the Creek Indian Nation into Florida, allowing General Andrew Jackson and the remainder of his command to wrap up the Creek War by the summer of 1814.¹³³ Claiborne had participated in the Holy Ground campaign but returned home afterwards to attend to his family and business again.¹³⁴

Just how he was involved in the large-scale attack on the sacred town of the Creek prophets, located between modern-day Selma and Montgomery, on the Alabama River, was mostly by accident. The participation with General Ferdinand Leigh Claiborne, and with Major John Pitchlynn, an interpreter and important tribal member of the Choctaw Nation, was indeed ironic. Not only were the General and Wright cousins, Major Pitchlynn would later have descendents who would marry into the

¹³² J.F.H. Claiborne, *Mississippi As A Province* (Baton Rouge, 1964), I, 319n. Mr. Claiborne, son of General Ferdinand Leigh Claiborne, commander of the Mississippi Volunteers in the War of 1812, says General Flournoy, commander of the 7th Military Division, headquartered at Mobile, was feeble and had little military experience, which might explain the few times he is mentioned in references pertaining to the Creek War.

Flournoy was a lawyer from Augusta, Georgia, but his military duties took him to Mobile in 1813 to replace the controversial General James Wilkinson, who was suddenly transferred to Canada after stirring the ire of white settlers in the Mississippi Territory. Claiborne said of Flournoy:

"He has been censured for inaction and indecision. . . but the prime source of his failure was the want of support at Washington. He was often without funds. . . and the false representations of [Indian Agent] Colonel Benjamin Hawkins [telling of] the 'advance civilization' and 'pacific disposition' of the Creeks. Even after the massacre at Fort Mims, Colonel Hawkins reiterated these assurances, laid the blame of that affair on the Tombigbee [River] people and declared that the war would be a 'civil war among the Creeks and not the whites' if let alone. Unfortunately, General Flournoy adopted these views, and forbode any aggressive movement on the savages, by the feebleness and incompetence of the War Department."

Wright family.¹³⁵

Pushmataha, the famous chief, and four Choctaw companies, which included Major Pitchlynn, joined forces with General Claiborne. The Indians did this despite the warnings and anti-white statements made by the great Shawnee warrier, Tecumseh. Tecumseh and his half-brother, *The Prophet*, had traveled to the southern tribes to attempt formation of a union of all Indians to deter and annihilate the western movement of the white settler into the Indian hunting and living quarters.¹³⁶

Pushmataha, urged by Pitchlynn, David Folsom, a mixed-blood trusted by the Choctaws, and two other Mingos--Mushulitubbee and Puckshenubbee--had steadfastly ignored and argued against Tecumseh. The Choctaw had dealt successfully with the white nation and expected to continue, fully realizing the force of the United States military could eventually crush their Nation, if desired.

Claiborne Wright joined with the Middle Tennessee Volunteers after word arrived in his state that the Creeks atrociously massacred the inhabitants of Fort Mims.¹³⁷ He later became a courier for General Jackson and was sent, along with several others, to deliver a letter to General Claiborne at Fort Stoddart, near Mt. Vernon, Alabama, just south of where the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers converge to form the larger Mobile River.¹³⁸

Jackson had written on December 18, 1813, while located at Ten Islands, on the east side of present-day Montgomery, a long letter describing a battle his troops had fought earlier with the Indians:¹³⁹

"Before this reaches you, you will have heard of our battle at Talladega. It was fought on the 9th of November, and was indeed a severe blow to the enemy.

It is impossible to tell, with any precision, the loss they sustained. We counted, however, two hundred and ninety-nine dead on the field."¹⁴⁰

General Jackson explained that he did not continue pursuit of the enemy because, "I was compelled by a double cause, the want of supplies and the want of cooperation from the East Tennessee troops, to return to this place."¹⁴¹ Talladega was no white answer to Fort Mims and the Indian massacre there. Only about 154 warriors with their families and 1,000 Creeks nearby participated. There were, however, over 3,000 Creeks at war and General Jackson's confidence of being able, if he had had the chance, to end the war right there was a bit naive.

Whatever the thought, several more key battles remained in Alabama before the Indian uprising would be eliminated to pave the way for more concentration on the British and Spanish agitation.

General Claiborne had already departed for the Holy Ground, the city also called Ikana chaka, nearly 120 miles above Fort Claiborne on the Alabama.¹⁴² Wright and his messenger group met up with them after the Mississippians had marched several days northeast into what is presently Butler County, just south of Double Swamp.¹⁴³ General Claiborne headed a contingent of 1,000

men consisting of the 3rd Regiment of the United States Infantry, a cavalry and a militia battalion, the 12-month Mississippi Volunteers and the Choctaw battalion.¹⁴⁴ He told Wright that the messengers must remain with the group for fear that Indians might intercept them returning to General Jackson.¹⁴⁵

Consequently, whether he planned it or not, Wright would be a part of the crushing blow to Chief William Weatherford's adopted people. Weatherford was, so the white's believed, responsible for the horrible attack and atrocities inflicted upon Fort Mims.

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Most white settlers in the three regions-Tennessee, Mississippi, and Georgia-blamed the beginning of the end for the Creeks on the action at Fort Mims. Actually, they ignored an ill-fated attempt to attack the Creeks at Burnt Corn Creek in July.¹⁴⁶ The Creeks, even though they had been aggressive before, used this attack on them as an excuse to murder the whites gathered at Fort Mims for safety.

The settlers at Fort Mims were commanded by General Daniel Beasley. And, since the Burnt Corn episode had occurred at noon, Weatherford and his angry band of Creeks waited until the drum beat signaled lunchtime in the Fort. General Beasley had ignored several warnings from General Claiborne about the laxity of the Fort's defenses.¹⁴⁷ Later, this allowed Weatherford, a Scotch, French and Indian blooded planter and trader, to lead the 400-1,500 followers into the Fort through the open front gates!

What followed is almost indescribable:

"The officers bravely endeavored to drive the Indians from the gateway, but bravery was now of no avail. Officers and soldiers fell in vain attempts to counteract the results of a want of vigilance in the past."¹⁴⁸

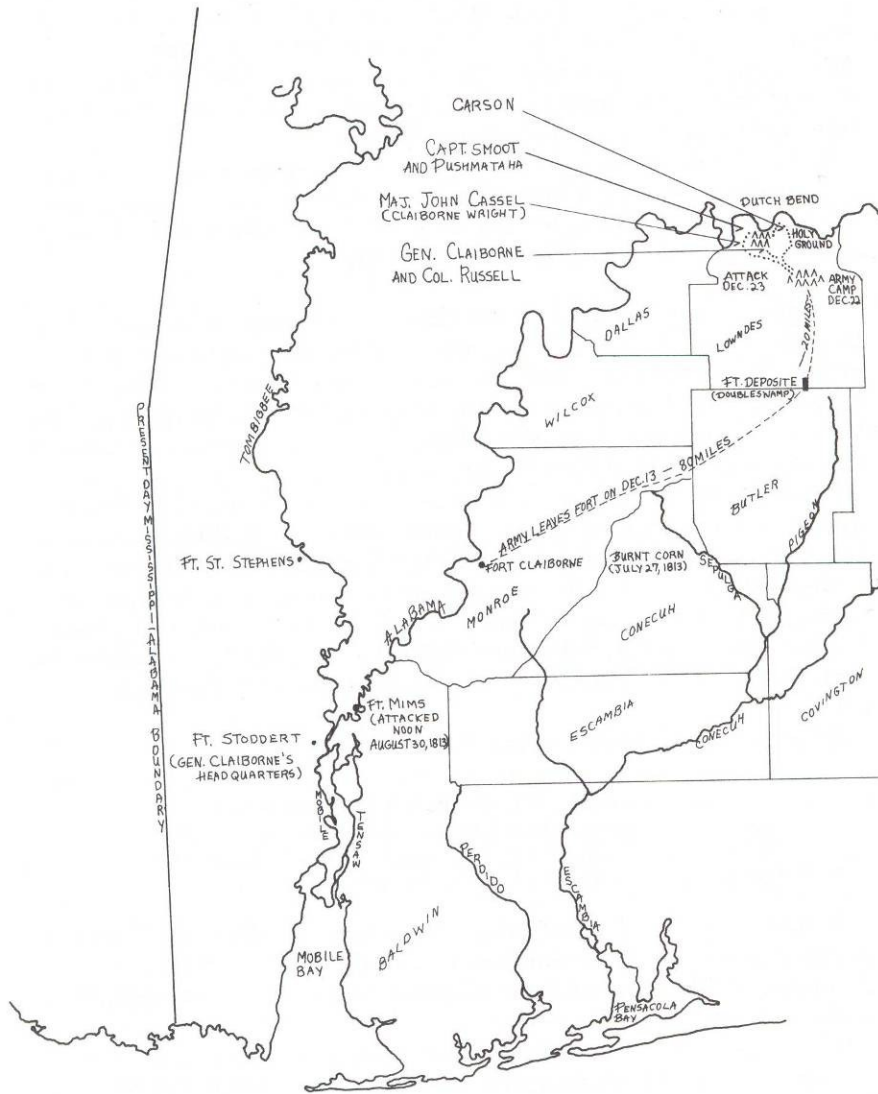
Of the 553 in the Fort, only about 36 escaped to tell of the disaster.¹⁴⁹ Weatherford left early, claiming he had to take care of his brother-in-law's slaves nearby. The remainder of the Indians retired from the burning Fort at about 5 p.m.

When messages of the event reached the outlying areas and settlers, there was little problem raising the needed men and capital. The State of Tennessee Legislature immediately voted to appropriate \$20,000 for the cause and raise 1,500 men to fight the savages.¹⁵⁰ Even though Tennessee was farther away than Georgia and Mississippi (which included Alabama in its territory), the more populous state was quick to organize forces in East and Middle Tennessee. General John Cocke, assisted by General James White, led a group from East Tennessee. This group often would not agree with its "leader," General Jackson, who organized the Middle (and West) Tennessee Volunteers.¹⁵¹

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General Claiborne and his men were now at a place called Fort Deposit (Deposit) and the view that Claiborne Wright would have of the Holy Ground Battle was beginning to materialize. The

quickly assembled fort was a facility near Double Swamp built by the General where he was to leave wagons, cannon, baggage and the sick, guarded by 100 men.¹⁵² He then left toward Holy Ground on December 22, 1813.



Holy Ground Campaign with William Weatherford and General Ferdinand Leigh Claiborne

Fast travel through the dense forest put the army within 10 miles of the Creek settlement by late in the afternoon. The 200 dwellings in Holy Ground would, for the first time, be attacked by the white man. The base for the Creek military operations was not much more prepared for the assault than was Fort Mims.

General Claiborne would head the 3rd Regiment along with Colonel Gilbert C. Russell, in the center. The Mississippi Volunteers, under Colonel Joseph Carson, would form the right column and on the left would be the column of Captain Benjamin Smoot, assisted by Pushmataha. Major John Cassel and his cavalry battallion would set themselves just west of the encampment to

prevent escape in that direction.¹⁵³ Claiborne Wright and his small contingent of Tennessee Volunteers on horseback would stand with the latter, waiting anxiously to see the results of the attack and take the message back to General Jackson.¹⁵⁴

With Colonel Carson's men bearing the brunt of the battle, the eager soldiers rapidly pressed the retreating Indians in all directions on the extremely foul and cold day. The Indians ran through the town and to a bluff near the mouth of the Holy Ground Creek. They forded the creek and escaped, carrying as many dead and wounded with them as possible.

Weatherford was the last to leave, or so the story goes, but found himself blocked by the river about 12 feet below:

"He turned down a long hollow that led to the bank of the river; on his arrival he found the bluff about twelve feet high; he took in at rapid glance the situation, and determined to make the leap; he rode back about thirty paces and turned his horse's head towards the bluff, and then, with touch of the spur. . . he put the noble animal to the top of his speed and dashed over the bluff full twenty feet into the flashing waters below, which opened it's bosom to receive the dauntless hero, who sought it's sparkling waters as a barrier between him and the pursuing foe. He did not lose his seat; his horse and the lower part of his body went entirely under the water-the gallant horse struck out for the opposite shore with his fearless rider upon his back."¹⁵⁵

Wright did not witness this, but he did have a chance to watch as Pushmataha's men took the spoils of the village, much of which was taken from Fort Mims back in August. General Claiborne ordered the place to be burned afterwards.

Taking note of casualties, the soldiers found that they had only one killed and 20 wounded. The Creeks left behind 33 dead, including one of their leading prophets. He was given the distinction of being one of the principal instigators of the disturbance with the white settlements.¹⁵⁶

Wright and the other Tennessee Volunteers prepared to return to General Jackson with the news. For General Claiborne, it marked his last great conflict. He and his volunteers would return to Fort Claiborne. Carson's men would be mustered out leaving only 60 soldiers! They barely had a month of service left to complete.

Without a cent of pay so far, the men began to disperse home to their families in Mississippi. General Claiborne soon followed, "as poor as themselves, and, with a constitution broken by exposure, soon died."¹⁵⁷ He was only 42.

In the meantime, Jackson was also having trouble keeping his volunteers from returning to Tennessee. Their enlistment time was expiring, it was cold and they were hungry. About 1,000 left before January, including Wright. By early 1814, he was back working on the Cumberland River.¹⁵⁸

Jackson, with fresh volunteers, would join with the Georgia troops and force the Indians to sue for peace after the Battle of Tohopeka, a great decisive event that broke the spirit of the Red Sticks. Jackson addressed his army:

"You have, within a few days, opened your way to the Tallapoosa, and destroyed a confederacy of the enemy . . . The fiends of the Tallapoosa will no longer murder our women and children, or disturb the quiet of our borders."¹⁵⁹

Though the defeat of the Creeks did not directly affect commerce in Tennessee, the end to the activities of the warring Indians put the British and the other Indian tribes with similar ideas on notice that the American government, despite its troubles, was not entirely vulnerable in that area.

For two years, Wright would lead a relatively peaceful existence!

4

Learning To Live In Pecan Point

As Claiborne Wright walked from the woods toward the trading post owned by Colonel William Mabbit and the Wetmore Brothers, George and Alex, realized how beautiful and inviting the country was despite the loneliness it might bring his wife, Betty, and the five children. However, he had traveled the wildernesses of America long enough to know that it was to be no great passage of time before other settlers would follow their tracks to Pecan Point.

He quickly decided to borrow Colonel Mabbit's lean-to and supply shack until the Wright's built their own space. That satisfied Betty and certainly the children, who were still feeling the effects of the fever they had contracted on the rough trip to Texas but were recovering remarkably. The slaves, Jeff, Ben, Hardy, Hardy's wife Jin, and her young brother, Ike, were already busy at work planning the area they would now call home. Jin was pregnant but not due for another two months. By then all would have shelter.¹⁶⁰

But as for food, meat would have to suffice for the time being--two years, almost. "There was provisions enough put up at the start of the trip to Texas to last two years," commented George Wright in his memoirs. "But all the flour had been on the water so long that it was so badly spoiled it had to be throwed away, for it made all sick."¹⁶¹

Still smarting from the horrors of the alligators and the sights of the Great Raft, George described the flour by saying, "It tasted just like and smelt just like the musk that comes from alligator!"¹⁶² So, what little flour was left from their sunken boathouse, *Pioneer*, was dumped into the Red River near their new home at Pecan Point. It was a land that was currently claimed by both the United States, through purchase of the Louisiana Territory in 1803, and by Spain, who claimed land to the Red

¹⁶⁰ *George Travis Wright Papers*, lone Lewis Copies (Steely Files), 12. Mary Vivian Daniel (or possibly someone else wrote this) notes on this page: "It seems reasonably sure that these slaves sold to Travis Wright in January, 1829 may have been the slave and family servants who came from Tennessee with the Claiborne Wright family to Texas in 1816. At that time Hardy was 21, Jin was about 16, and Ike, her brother, about 9." Jin was "in child," according to George Wright when they arrived at Pecan Point. Hardy is assumed to be the same person who, in 1834, was with Gabriel Martin when Indians murdered the judge. George Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 1817 (George Wright's Memoirs), unpublished account of life in or near Pecan Point from 1817 through late 1830's. (It is assumed the writing is by Wright, but some speculate a portion was by John Hopkins Fowler, his cousin. The handwriting looks like it is by Wright.), 38.

¹⁶¹ George Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, (written sometime between 1860-1870), 39.

River.¹⁶³

It didn't matter, however, who owned the land. It was unpopulated and lacking in civilization but waiting to be developed by someone! Claiborne Wright planned for his family to be the first to stay.

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The gun was his only means of providing and it was necessary for self-defense. "The gun was the meat, bread, salt and coffee, and in fact, the gun was all in all and it was Enough for to support the family," remembered George. ". . . for without her [the gun] there could not have any [thing] been done for, in fact, everything depended upon the gun."¹⁶⁴

Yesterday's common meat of venison and bear meat would be today's delicacy! "I think I have seen as many as five fine deer shot down and slain in the yard in one morning," quotes George. "That will give you a better idea of the wildness of the country than anything else I could say. If a buffalo was wanted, it could always be killed and delivered at the camp or house the same day," he continued. "And, if we wanted fat meat, all that we had to do was to [call] Capt. Birkam's dog and could kill a fine bear at any time to season the lean meats. . . ."¹⁶⁵

The skins off the kill that gave meat also furnished abundant supplies of coffee.¹⁶⁶ The settlers could always "wander through the woods and find and cut a bea tree [hive]," said George, obtaining enough honey to answer their sweet tooth.

A Tennessean, Adam Lawrence, had already experienced life in the Red River Valley a year before the Wright family arrived.¹⁶⁷ He settled in Texas in 1815, according to an 1830 notation in the Register of the Wavell Red River Colony, filed by Benjamin R. Milam, agent of Arthur G. Wavell.¹⁶⁸ Although there is a strong possibility that this date is actually a bit early, Lawrence nonetheless is credited "to have been the first white man to come to what became the Red River County, Republic of Texas."¹⁶⁹

Lawrence settled on the same property that George Wright would later purchase as a portion of his plantation and which would serve as Wright's home until 1839.¹⁷⁰ Lawrence was a trapper and hunter and probably had never settled at anyone place for a great length of time. However, he stayed at this place called Mound Prairie above the mouth of the Kiamichi River for about two years.¹⁷¹

The "famous" Indian fighter and mustang catcher finally met his death in April 1826 at the hands of a group of Indians.¹⁷²

Those who had the courage, or ignorance, to wander into the Valley in those first days of settlement usually met trouble with Indians. For example, in October, 1815, Jacob Barkman, Andrew Robinson and Abraham Anthony were attacked by a party of Osages while traveling through the country between Boggy Bayou and "Kiamisha." They were searching for an encampment of fellow hunters who were located on the west bank of the Kiamichi, about 40 miles above the River's mouth.

Claiborne Wright and his close friends read this account of the incident as published in the *Arkansas Gazette* in 1820:

" . . . on meeting a party of Osage Indians, it was discovered that they intended murder, by their preparations for firing. Mr. Anthony fled immediately, and Mr. B., perceiving his danger, put whip to his horse, and while in sight of Mr. A. discovered that the Indians were in pursuit of him-Mr. A.'s hat and the skull of a man was found a short distance from the place where Mr. B saw him last."¹⁷³

Trouble seemed to brew for those who ventured west of the Kiamichi River. The next June, in 1816, John Smith Archils was beheaded 15 miles from the mouth of the Kiamichi while returning to his camp.¹⁷⁴

Later, in December of the same year, Henry Jones, Martin Varner and George Creason were camped near the mouth of Choctaw Bayou on the Texas side when the Osages rushed them at dawn. Varner and Jones were seriously hurt, but everyone managed to find an avenue of escape, losing only their belongings.¹⁷⁵

The author of these accounts to the *Gazette*, most likely William Stevenson, went on in a lengthy letter to explain publisher William Woodruff that in the summer of 1817, another depredation by the Osages was committed against some settlers near the "Kiamisha." In this attack, a Mr. Scretchfield was killed and a Mr. [Jonathon or Wyatt] Anderson, wounded. They had been hunting in the dangerous area and on their return were ambushed.

Stevenson, a member of the 1820 Territory of Arkansas General Assembly representing Hempstead County, added that in 1818 Joseph English, of the Clear Creek area north of the Red River, lost several horses valued at about \$1,000. Osage Indians were blamed for this theft near the area that was attracting many farmers. It was a lush piece of land, to be sure.

Lawrence was robbed by a band of Osages at his house in 1818. The Indians took clothing and "many other things, and left a respectable family in a deplorable condition, in a wilderness and frontier country."¹⁷⁶



These Two Previous Pages Are From A Double Map
On Pages 48 & 49 In The Printed Version¹⁷⁷

Stevenson, who gathered his information from friends and fellow Assemblymen, added that there were also other major instances with the Indians on the Red River. In 1819, he said, thirteen horses were stolen at Pecan Point by the Caddo Indians. Captain Nathaniel Robbins, who would become more and more frustrated with such activities, and two others, pursued and overtook the group of bandits. The Caddos took to the woods and made a stand. Since there were 10-12 Indians versus the trio of whites, Robbins wisely concluded it unsafe to fight and resorted to simply applying to Captain John Fowler, United States Factor at the mouth of the Sulphur Fork of the Red River, for assistance. He met a very cold reception. There was little Fowler could do, realistically, for he was having similar problems.

Finally, Stevenson writes that just a few months before his letter to the *Gazette*, Caleb Greenwood and two companions were fired upon at night, while in camp, by a band of Indians. "A ball passed through Greenwood's shirt collar, without doing him any injury," writes Stevenson. The three escaped to the woods, leaving their furs, clothing and other utensils to the Indians. *But, they were alive!*¹⁷⁸

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These Indian troubles would plague the V alley for many years to come, and according to George Wright, would not end until the late 1830's. Despite these dangers, settlers arriving at Pecan Point, prepared or not, would still venture out into the wilderness to live.

William Mabbitt continued to travel northeast of Pecan Point to his salt works near what was to become the Clearcreek Road from Washington, Arkansas, to Cantonment Towson.¹⁷⁹ "Old Bob" [Robert B.] Musick kept up his whiskey drinking and native ways, and Henry B. Greenwood, father or perhaps the brother of Caleb, brought his family, acquiring land also opposite the Kiamichi River.¹⁸⁰

Many of the earlier hunters and temporary settlers, such as Henry Jones and Martin Varner, went on south into Texas to escape the problems associated with Indians and to seek new lands.¹⁸¹

Claiborne Wright, however, was determined to stay!

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¹⁷⁸ *Arkansas Gazette*, February 18, 1820, 3:1. Since Stevenson's constituency was in Hempstead County, which included the Kiamichi, Clear Creek and Pecan Point areas, he surely felt it necessary to bring the problems to print. He asserted, in closing the letter, that it was time to assist the settlers there. Strickland, *Chronicles*, XVIII, No.1, 16. Dr. Strickland says Greenwood left the Red River area before July 1825. (Greenwood probably left ca. 1820 for St. Louis). Wright relates that in 1844 Caleb Greenwood appeared at Sutter's Fort in California, accompanied by two sons, John and Britton. Greenwood is last noted in 1846 at Lake County, California, in his eighty-third year.

¹⁷⁹ See map on page 52 and 53. Original in article by Rex Strickland, "Miller County, Arkansas Territory, The Frontier That Men Forgot, Chapter III, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XIX, No. 1 (March, 1941), 43.

¹⁸⁰ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 69. John Robbins later purchased the Greenwood place near Jonesborough (Juansburg).

By late 1817, Claiborne and Betty were concerned over the lack of nutrition for the family, and hearing of a man named Price who had raised some corn near the Sabine [Saline?] Landing on the Little River, decided it worth the risk to obtain the precious seeds.¹⁸² With his son William, Claiborne borrowed two horses and traveled the 150 miles, successfully buying five bushels of corn, two of which were "headed up in a barel for seed." According to George, who must have been plenty excited about the new found treasure, the "balance was given to the old lady [Betty] and daughter [Henrietta] to make a little nurishment for them [the family] when sick until we could raise corn. . . and thus things went on in that day and time."¹⁸³

As an eight year old, George was impressed with the surroundings. And a half-century later when he wrote about the events, he still was proud of the fact that he remembered little complaining done by the family about their circumstances. About this first year at Pecan Point, he said, "I do not recollect to have heard a murmur out of one of the family. . . but all seemed determined to bear all and do the best that could be done under the circumstances."¹⁸⁴

Without a boat, the family could not move on anyway. By the time another vessel could have been constructed, "all seemed to be as well satisfied as though they have had an abundance of every kind of luxuries of life and lived in palaces instead of the little hut for the house." George said that since the house was built by logs only as large as could be carried by a man, "you can have some idea of what kind of a house it was that the family had to occupy."¹⁸⁵

The family, as George points out later in his writings, was fortunate to survive those first years. Many before and after them did not.

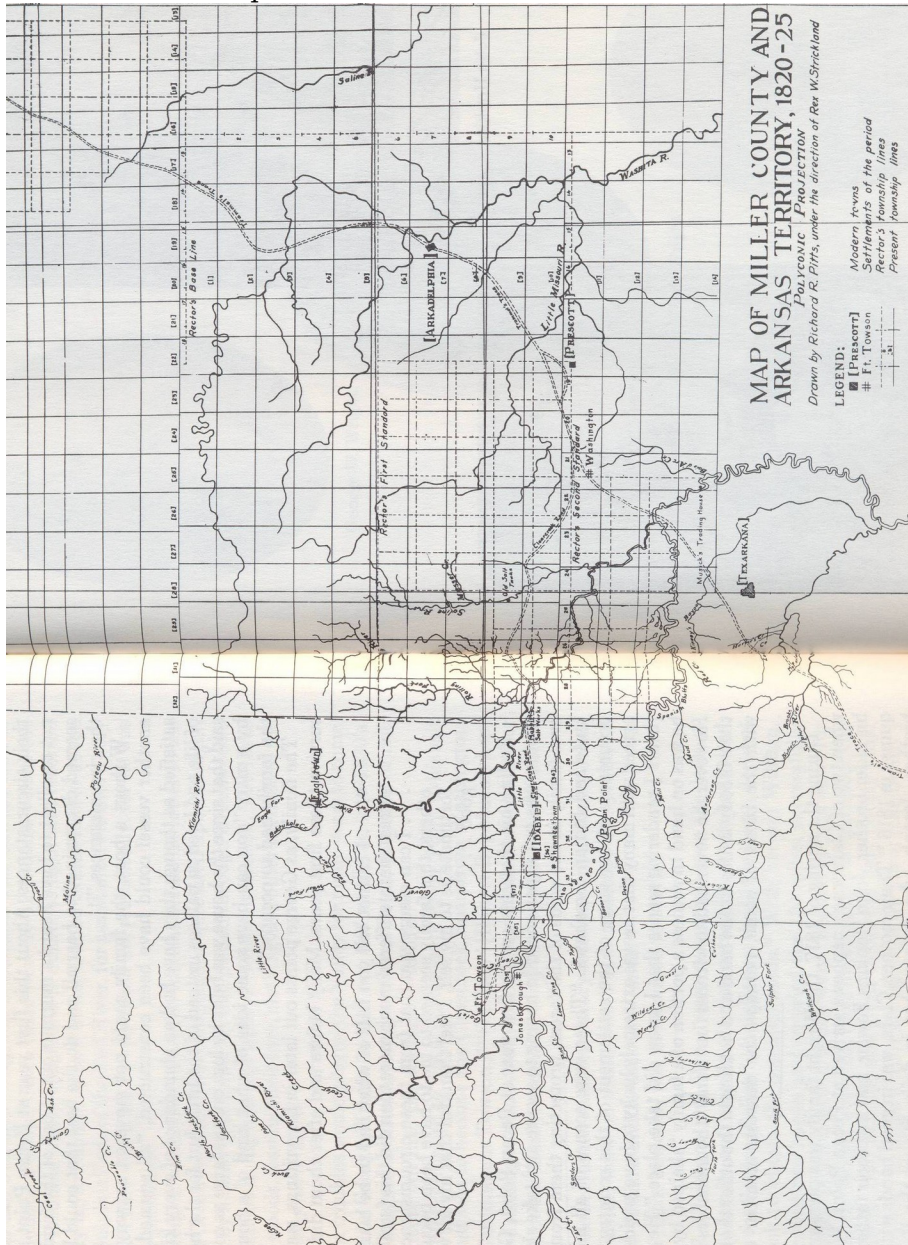
" . . . I cannot tell you half of what had to be bourn for a great many suffered much more than did this family and . . . I can assure you that from these circumstances, or others, this family seemed to me to have been pecularly fortunate as to my self, I feel thankful that my lot was as good. . . "¹⁸⁶

Ending his thoughts on the first year at Pecan Point, George reflects that he was not experienced in having to secure and take shelter with his own family in the wilds of the forest, protecting them from the scalping knife and Indian tomahawk. "These were scenes of all most every day occurences at our stage of the settlement of this country," he said. He agreed with many that he was extremely lucky to have avoided "those hart [heart] rendering scenes that I know did take place." He did note that he was on hand to witness a portion of a family "skelped by the savages." However, he never had to witness first hand "the monstors standing with their bloody knives in one hand and holding in the other the skelp, dripping with the blood of some, perhaps the dearest, member of the family "¹⁸⁷

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During the spring of 1817, the Wright family was pleasantly surprised when two of Claiborne's nephews arrived at Pecan Point.

Wiley Paul and his older brother, John Hopkins Fowler, had lost their father, Godfrey, to quinsy in 1816.¹⁸⁸ Their mother, Clara, was in good hands with John's twin brother, Joseph, who assisted her in daily life on the Fowler farm in Caldwell County, Kentucky. Therefore, the lure of Texas was in their blood, too, fueled by Claiborne's description of the land and life there.





George W. Wright



Travis Wright



Alexander Wright



John Hopkins Fowler



W. P. Fowler
Willey P. Fowler

The two Fowler brothers left the security of home in April, cruised into the Ohio River shortly thereafter on their flatboat and headed toward Pecan Point, stopping along the way to visit occasionally the interesting sites. They rested among Chickasaw Indians in Western Kentucky. A year later, this land was to be called "the Jackson Purchase." It was near the area ruled by Chief Paduke. This faction of the Chickasaw Nation was relatively free from habits of bloodshed. The Fowlers and some friends who would accompany them part of the way stayed only a short time here before pushing off for the western lands.¹⁸⁹

This party later came across land to reach Texas rather than risk the goods they brought by traveling through the Great Raft on the Red River. When they arrived, instead of following suit and joining the Wrights on the south side of the River, the brothers set up farming activities north of Pecan Point, but not too far from their uncle.¹⁹⁰ However, they made no permanent settlement during those first two years and roamed the countryside often, enjoying its beauty and wildlife.¹⁹¹

But, life on the frontier became too lonely for Wiley P. and after several attempts to establish an operational farm, he longed to be surrounded by people again. Even though about 50 new families had arrived in Pecan Point since his first sight of the area, restlessness and the desire to study law got the best of him. In 1822 he left, never to return, but always to think of his brother in Texas.¹⁹² John remained to assist his uncle and others in formulating the Red River Valley, both politically and economically. His twin brother, Joseph, elected to remain in Kentucky, never seeing John again.¹⁹³

That doesn't mean the brothers and family were not close, however. Far from it. Letters back and forth prove their literacy and describe life in Texas and back in Kentucky. John's life at Pecan Point, Clear Creek and Jonesboro, and his activities as Circuit Court Clerk, postmaster, sheriff, and as a member of the Arkansas Legislative Council gave the other brothers--Bradford, Jerry, Littleton and Andrew Jackson Fowler--a strong desire to join the early pioneers. Three of the four would live productive and interesting lives in Texas.¹⁹⁴

Religion, in the organized sense, also came to the Red River Valley settlements in early 1817, according to a letter written in 1883 by James Graham, a prominent Northeast Texas minister. "Mr. Martin Ragsdale informed Brother Graham that as early as

¹⁸⁹ Bill Cunningham, *Flames In The Wind* (Bowling Green, Kentucky: 1981), 13. Cunningham did not remember many of his sources for this narrative, but most were taken from previous accounts. There is no family record of the "friends" mentioned.

¹⁹⁰ Mrs. James Joyce Arthur, *Annals of the Fowler Family*, (Shreveport, Austin, 1901), 64.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 321. It is doubtful that the Fowler brothers stayed any length of time on the north side since the Wrights lived on the south side of the Red River at that time. However, the term "Pecan Point," referred to both sides of the River. This article quoted in the APPENDIX of *Annals* was supposedly written by George Wright for an old Texas newspaper (See the edited version of *Memoirs* by Steely with old letters attached) and later found in A.J. Fowler's "Family Scrapbook." Fowler descendants of the writer of *Annals* were not located prior to publication of this volume.

1817 there was a Methodist class organized at Jonesboro, of which a Mr. Amos Tidwell was leader. This was unquestionably the first organization in Texas," he wrote.¹⁹⁵

However, Graham is wrong on the date. Actual contact with a preacher at Pecan Point came to the Wright family a year earlier after they had constructed their first home near the trading post. According to evidence, most likely a good friend of Elizabeth Travis Wright's family back in South Carolina, William Stevenson, was the first to preach in the Valley. Claiborne probably first met him during the Fall of 1800 at one of the camp meetings held in the Cumberland Valley area of Tennessee. They would solidify their friendship there. Although both came from religious backgrounds other than Methodism, they were slowly converted to the ideals of that church.¹⁹⁶

Religion did not come easy for a roughly cut character like Claiborne Wright. His son, Travis, would later even refute organized religion, following in the footsteps of Claiborne, who apparently felt that living a good life was the main goal to achieve. Betty was later the stronger influence in his religious leanings, and he seemed to feel it was best to follow her inclination.

William and Henrietta Wright, Claiborne's parents, had been influenced by the Englishman, John Elsbery, back in Fauquier County, Virginia. The preacher had held several revivals under the auspices of the Baptist Church. Elsbery was well-educated, cultured and an excellent orator, drawing large audiences to his side, including many of the Wright family. He also was a man of some wealth, able to finance his own way.

A move to Surry County, North Carolina, five years before Claiborne's life began, put his family near where Elsbery owned a large plantation. William and Henrietta were assigned 100 acres from the family tract, which was located next to Elsbery's farm. Thus, Claiborne's background was basically Baptist, worshipping mostly at Elsbery's Chapel on Flat Rock Creek. His mother, Henrietta, was raised in the Presbyterian faith, but liked Elsbery. However, she never joined his church.¹⁹⁷

It was in 1800 that Stevenson, and probably Claiborne, began to feel the effect of the Tennessee meetings.¹⁹⁸ Two years later, early in 1802, Stevenson visited Chester County, South Carolina, accompanied by Claiborne Wright. He met Elizabeth there and began a long love affair that would take the pair over 1,400 miles from her home by 1816.¹⁹⁹ They were married on February 12, 1802, and apparently remained members of the Baptist faith until they moved to Smith County, Tennessee in 1804.²⁰⁰ Claiborne was even a messenger in the Bethel Association's Chester County Siloam Baptist Church, along with his friend, William Woodward, in 1803. His duties included overseeing the conduct of members and to admonish them of their sins--breaking the sabbath and keeping bad company! But, he and Elizabeth tired of the constant bickering and the potential split among the factions of the Baptist Church. Add to this the draw to return to Tennessee and a new way of life and religious thought, and the temptation was too great.²⁰¹

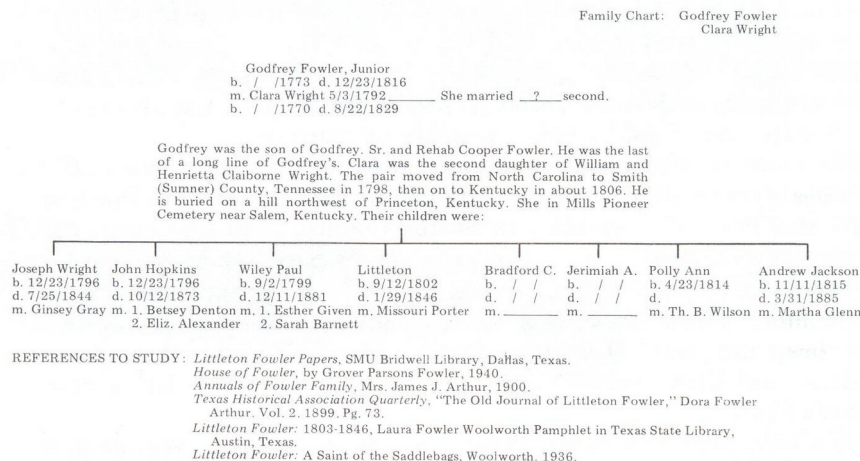
At the age of 32, in 1800, Stevenson had made the move to become a Methodist even though his parents, James and Elizabeth, had been Presbyterians and Claiborne remained a Baptist.²⁰² Mrs.

Stevenson had been reconverted and joined the Baptist Church when William was five. This may have been due to the influence of William's uncle, the Rev. James Fowler, a Baptist preacher in South Carolina.²⁰³ Thus, some evidence surfaces that Stevenson, as well as the Wrights, was also kin to the Fowler clan, if not by blood, possibly by marriage.

Therefore, after he turned his curiosity to Methodism in the late 1790's, Stevenson was destined to eventually join his friends at Pecan Point in 1816. But first, while residing in Shelby County, Kentucky, he found peace and contentment in the Methodist Episcopal Church, then moved to Tennessee in 1800.²⁰⁴ Here, "a great work of God" was underway.²⁰⁵ He wrote later, "There was a large, living society of Methodists there, land was cheap and good." It is likely some relatives were living there, too.²⁰⁶ Godfrey and Clara Fowler had been there for two years, living near Dixon's Creek.²⁰⁷

Stevenson went west before Wright, moving to Bellevue, Washington County, Missouri, in 1809 with other members of his family. By then he and his wife, Jane Campbell, already had eight of their eleven children. Here, Stevenson tangled in politics with another future acquaintance of the Wrights, losing in an 1815 election attempt against Stephen F. Austin for the office of representative in the General Assembly of the Territory of Missouri.

FAMILY CHART: Godfrey Fowler



Note: John Fowler married also Betsey Stevenson Johnson

Methodism already was organized in Missouri. It was strongly constructed after South Carolinian John Travis was appointed there in 1806.²⁰⁸ He established two circuits, one including the Bellevue Valley where Stevenson would start his "serious" preaching in 1809, joining with Methodist circuit riders and becoming a leader in this group. In 1813, following the advice of Rev. Jesse Walker, Stevenson was ordained and began to give more and more time to preaching.²⁰⁹

That Fall, his brother, James, living in Clark County, Arkansas, visited William at Bellevue and commented about the lack of such religious influences in the settlements along the Red River and other such areas of Arkansas. This began a series of

trips through the new Territory.²¹⁰ His first contact with Pecan Point came while traveling in the company of his son-in-law, John Johnson (husband of his daughter, Betsey) and Joseph Reed.²¹¹ Reed and Johnson both later moved to the Red River area.

Nearly 400 miles from his home Stevenson found a settlement of a few Americans in the Spanish Province of Texas. "Here I formed a society in the same year [1815]."²¹² This six-month tour of the wilderness did not discourage future such ventures. It is possible, also, that he wrote Claiborne, telling of the beautiful land and the possibilities for a good life in Texas.

Whatever the circumstances, Stevenson was traveling in Texas and the Red River Valley in 1817 and preached in Claiborne Wright's home that by then was only 80 miles distance from Stevenson's new abode in Mound Prairie, Arkansas, which was five miles northwest of Washington, Hempstead County.²¹³

Stevenson's influence also brought many other families into the area, including familiar Southwestern Arkansas names such as John Johnson, John Bunyan Denton, Joseph Reed, Henry Stephenson, Jacob Shook and Green Orr. The Wright home became a regular "Methodist preaching place."²¹⁴ A close bond was developing among Stevenson, Wright and John Hopkins Fowler.²¹⁵ In fact, all three would serve to create a government for the Territory of Arkansas in the immediate future.²¹⁶

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In July, 1817, Nathaniel Robbins became a welcomed addition to the community.²¹⁷ He brought with him a sufficient number of livestock to disperse among the settlers. Cultivation was on the verge of becoming a common-place sight, especially in the dried lakes located near the river. A serious lack of precipitation had held the Valley in the grips of a drought during the past two years.²¹⁸

George Wright recalls that at least four families joined the settlement in 1818: Walter Pool and four children; Jonathan Bateman, wife and one son; Charles Burkham and family; and Stephen Wiley with four sons, three of whom were Indian traders.²¹⁹

Pecan Point in 1818 was much fun for the children. Snow came for the first time since they had been in Texas. Back in Tennessee this had been a common experience, but today was the first such white event the Wrights had witnessed in Texas. It was December 23 and the drought was ending. Big, huge flakes fell upon the Red River Valley on the night before Christmas Eve. Another six inches of snow had blanketed the Red River Valley the night before, and it was so cold that sheets of ice reached far out into the chilly waters of the Red River.²²⁰

Even then the children were taught that their manners had to be manicured so close to Christmas if they were to expect the best results on the 25th! So, it was going to be a big day. Claiborne was on his way down to the creek to check the trap lines after noon, taking George with him. Most likely, Claiborne would have an eye peeled for that old turkey gobbler who had been running with the hens over north of the house.

George said pulled his heavy, hand-made wool coat on and trailed along behind Claiborne's huge steps, attempting to land his

own feet in his father's huge imprints at least every other time he swung his feet along! Claiborne smiled, and took shorter steps. He didn't suspect that this would be the last really happy and active Christmas the family would spend with Betty, his wife and best friend. The next year she would be suffering through a hard pregnancy at Christmas time, on the verge of death.

When they returned, George burst into the house. He announced they had food for the occasion. Betty was adapting to the new life, too.

Christmas Eve day was for cooking, a custom Betty brought with her from South Carolina when the large Travis family would come together in reunion at that time of the year. The night before had been set aside for cutting of paper decorations for the Christmas tree, a habit Claiborne's family had observed since the Revolutionary War when they learned that the German's celebrated in that manner. It was fun but the children, as well as Claiborne, had been well-versed by their mothers on the meaning of Christmas. However, they were still excited over the possibility of any small gifts they might find under the scantily decorated tree the next morning.

Two pies were already cooling. The cake was on the fireplace, in a big dutch oven Betty had managed to purchase from Alexander Wetmore in exchange for a free dinner or two. Wetmore had become a very close friend. In fact, she planned to name her next son after him; she hoped that would be soon! But for now, she worried about the short supply of flour. Claiborne had traded some buffalo hides to a fellow who came up the river, and managed to receive only a little flour in the deal.

Darkness that night came none too soon for the Wright children. The Valley was bathed in moonlight. The jingle of old St. Nick's bells could be heard, if the children listened quietly, Claiborne said, as he bid them goodnight.

After taking time to amuse themselves with their stockings, the children reluctantly went off to the other room. They all slept in one big room, warmed by a large fireplace on the north wall. In the morning, there would be hard candy, small wood-carved toys and some jewelry Claiborne had purchased from some friendly Indians at Mabbit's post.

A happy Christmas came to the Valley in 1818. They would never be the same in the future.²²¹

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Many single men, hunting in the area, temporarily used the settlement to visit, including Martin Varner, Henry Jones, John Cropton, George Creason, Charles Campbell and William English.²²²

They were not schooled in books. A Cross or X oftentimes testified as their signatures. Their religion was the stern Calvinism of the frontier, released at times in the almost pathological emotionalism of the camp meeting.²²³ However, it was a Calvinism softened by the Arminianism of the Methodist, William Stevenson.²²⁴

And, as agreed upon by George Wright, too, the physical needs of these first pioneers were few. They were strong, rugged

and usually large men, necessary tools to have to face the perils surrounding them. If life was hard for the men, what must it have been for their wives?²²⁵ Loneliness for others of their sex added to the actual perils of living far from every comfort save the most primitive sort, conspired to make their lot an unenviable one.

Dr. Rex W. Strickland, who studied extensively these Pioneers, described further the female's life in the wilderness:

"Their children were born without the benefit of physician and often even the midwifery, save that of the husband. Sickness was prevalent among the children and time and again one small tot was dead before the birth of the next."

Nevertheless, the physical peril was not as grinding in all probability as the psychological perils. The immobility of staying at home alone for weeks was more wearing than the mobility of the long hunt. Indian warfare weighed more heavily on the woman; men were killed by the savages but too often the lot of the woman was captivity and violation at the hands of the aborigine.²²⁶

But the population expanded as the business transacted by Mabbit and the Wetmores was growing, and Pecan Point, named *Nanatscho*, by the Indians, was quickly becoming the center of activity-and more livable! Despite this, the orders by the United States government were to not barter with the Caddo. The trade post prospered simply by ignoring the decree.²²⁷

Complaints were filed, however, by a Caddo chief in April, 1817. The Indian agent at Natchitoches, John Jamison, along with a Major Riddle, took a detachment of soldiers from nearby Cantonment Jessup up the Red River. They rode the distance to Pecan Point and attempted to remove a dozen families to the north side of the River.²²⁸ The Wrights were included. But, the moment Jamison left, the settlers and traders, and the Wrights, were back home.²²⁹

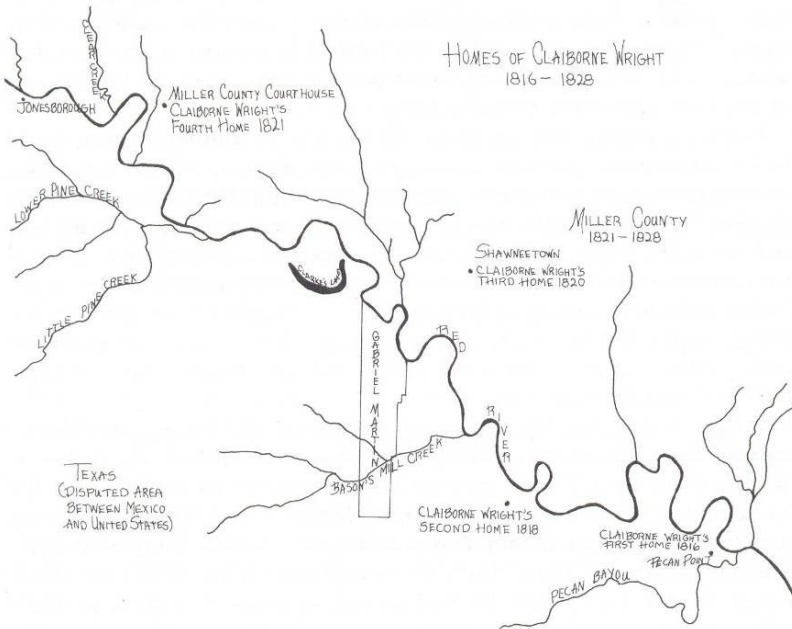
By 1818, over 40 people lived at Pecan Point and several new families arrived that year, including those of Joseph Levins and John Humphreys, bringing corn, horses, cows, hogs and "luxuries."²³⁰ Claiborne decided at that point to sell the original place he had built near the trading post and move a few miles west, up the river on higher and better ground. Nathaniel Robbins paid Claiborne two mares, two cows, two shoats and some seed corn for the log house and improvement on the farm.

Claiborne was now confident of the country and felt more secure about living away from the "civilized" areas. After all, Henry Jones, now with a family, as well as several others, was forming a substantial settlement called Jonesborough, on the south side of the Red River, a few miles west of Gabriel Martin's large claim.²³¹ Claiborne located to the east of Martin, but only stayed at this farm for a couple of years before deciding to move to a point in what is now Oklahoma, southwest of Idabel. He named it Shawnee town, in memory of his days working with Phillip Trammell in Illinois. Claiborne had been impressed with that piece of land three years when Jamison ordered the settlers north of the river.²³² Betty was frail in health now, and he hoped this move to be near more people would help her through her sixth pregnancy.²³³

The move was convenient and well-planned. The children

pitched in to help whenever feasible, with the possible less than 100 percent participation of Henrietta, who was love-bitten by the older Martin. A romance between the two had begun as a result of the 1818 move from Pecan Point to near Martin's land. Martin would have to wait five more years, however, to marry the intriguing Henrietta.²³⁴

HOMES OF THE CLAIBORNE WRIGHT FAMILY: 1816-1821 (See Footnote 75 for other versions)



By March 2, 1819 the portion of the Missouri Territory called Arkansas County had been named a Territory by President James Monroe, and officially came under the jurisdiction of Governor James Miller on July 4, 1819.²³⁵

The Arkansas Territory was originally a part of the Louisiana Purchase lands and organized into a separate Territory sixteen years later, including present day Arkansas, a part of Missouri, Oklahoma and an indefinite part of North Texas extending to the Sabine River and the headwaters of the Trinity River.²³⁶ However, Mexico, free from Spain by 1819, disputed this claim, saying her boundaries extended to and included the immediate south bank of the Red River, a part being what would later, in February, 1820, be named Miller County by the Arkansas General Assembly.²³⁷

The Pecan Point District of Mexico for years, actually until 1836, had Mexican politicians and alcaldes stationed in North Texas, especially at Pecan Point and Jonesborough (Juansburg, as some Mexicans called it), to collect taxes from residents for the Mexican government.²³⁸ The boundary dispute with Arkansas was not settled until 1838, when the lands south of the Red River were assigned to Texas.

In the meantime, settlers on the Red River, beginning in 1821, began to send their own representatives to the General Assembly at Little Rock, turning most of their governmental attention to the Territory of Arkansas. Earlier, the July 4, 1819

Arkansas organic act had provided that all laws in force in the Missouri Territory, not inconsistent with the provisions of the act, should be in force in Arkansas Territory until modified or repealed by the Arkansas governmental body.²³⁹ This, unknown then to Claiborne Wright, would begin a political chapter in his life that would establish his name in the records as being one of the early governmental participants in that state's history.

Wright had been the Justice of the Peace of Hempstead County, representing the Red River Valley constituents in Washington, Arkansas at the second term of the Common Pleas Court. It was held there at the house of John English on December 27, 1819.²⁴⁰ Here Claiborne first met such men as RC. Oden, Samuel Roane, Chester Ashley, Benjamin Clark, Thomas Dooley and many others who would give of their time to establish justice for the Territory.²⁴¹ He had served on juries also, prior to 1821, before the establishment of Miller County, with friends like Joshua Morrison, John Clark, Bailey English, Jacob Pennington, James Smith and George Wetmore. In the March term, 1821, Claiborne Wright is still listed as a Justice of the Peace, shortly before the Valley inhabitants were allowed to formulate their own governmental structure, closer to home.²⁴²

Claiborne watched and read the *Gazette* to learn just how the Arkansas Territory would be directed. Brigadier General James Miller, at the age of 43, was chosen from four candidates to take the post of Territorial governor. The New Hampshire native arrived late in the Territory, one day before the first Court of Common Pleas met in Hempstead County, in 1819. He had taken his time along the way after finishing his business in Washington, D.C.²⁴³ In the time that passed while waiting for Miller, the office of Territorial secretary, a much sought after position, was won when the appointment of 22 year-old Robert Crittenden of Kentucky was announced.²⁴⁴ He was the younger brother of then United States Senator John J. Crittenden.²⁴⁵

On October 20, 1819, Crittenden issued a proclamation directing an election. Later, when Governor Miller arrived, he declared this move illegal, but it was eventually upheld.²⁴⁶ The first elections in Arkansas saw James Woodson Bates defeat such notable candidates as Stephen F. Austin, a last minute entrant, who found strong support in Hempstead County, and Alexander S. Walker for delegate to Congress.²⁴⁷ Acting Governor Crittenden made many appointments before the arrival of Miller. Consequently by the time the Legislative Council of nine and the House of Representatives of two from each county met on February 7, 1820, the political structure of the new Territory was established.

Miller and Phillips Counties were created in that first session, joining Pulaski, Arkansas, Lawrence, Clark and Hempstead as the first seven counties of Arkansas.²⁴⁸ Miller County would not be officially one of the Assembly members until after April 1, 1821. Claiborne Wright would be elected as a member of the Legislative Council and begin eight years of political activity.

But before life among legislators would begin, his companion for the past 18 years bore him their fifth son, Alexander Wetmore Wright, on January 11, 1820, at Shawneetown. He was named after their good friend and fellow trader.²⁴⁹

Events of the past four years took their toll on the mentally tough, but physically fragile partner. She died four days later, January 15, 1820, unable to regain her strength. Betty would not be with Claiborne to view his most productive years.

A few months later, Claiborne moved his family to the new improvement he had claimed ten miles east of the mouth of the Kiamichi, the next-to-last home he would build.²⁵⁰

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Events In Mississippi Signal The End For Old Miller County, Arkansas

Henrietta Wright quickly became the “mother” of the house. A little over four months had passed since their mother, Elizabeth, slipped away after Alex's birth. Now, the young child of yesterday, who previously had been so carefree and mobile to wander about as she wished, was the woman of the house. Of course, she had help from the loyal servant, Jin, and others, but the burden was on her shoulders to temporarily take the place of her deceased mother.

Henrietta, fiery, red-haired and freckled faced, was actually very attractive. She was of small stature, not like her father and brothers, who all were above average in height. Her eyes were brown, though, and her aggressiveness was similar to Claiborne's.²⁵¹ She accompanied him occasionally on slave buying ventures; also to Shawneetown, Pecan Point and Jonesborough on errands. Traveling around these “municipalities” was not a time consuming function, for they were still very small settlements.

Still, she enjoyed the rides out over the Red River to near Jonesborough, joining her brothers, George and William, working on their farm. Claiborne had obtained a tract of land to the east, but records have not been found to designate an exact location.²⁵²

Almost everywhere she went, “Netta” would run into Gabriel Martin, who was becoming very active in local politics and business ventures. His huge land grant east of the Wright Plantation was partially cultivated, but his toll ferry business was beginning to be more profitable now that Jonesborough and that portion of land south of the Red River was being settled rapidly.²⁵³

[illegible]

Life was hard, especially since Elizabeth was gone, but it was good to the Wright family and others in the Valley. George Wright wrote:

Indian problems would be a subject that would keep the Red River Valley settlers uneasy for the next decade and a half. But, because of the two previous successful years, from the point of agricultural production, these problems were in the back of the minds of those pioneers as they slipped into the 1820.

"[This] gave quite a population for this country at that date and they brought with them some cows and hogs which was quite an acquisition. In 1819 corn was raised as high up the river as horse prairie and sassafras bluffs."²⁵⁵

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For over seven years Andrew Jackson had been successfully completing a series of treaties to remove Indian tribes that blocked southern and western expansion. North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky and now Mississippi were to be free of Native Americans who were obstacles to the idea that the United States would sweep along the Southern Gulf Coast. Jackson envisioned possessing all of Spanish North America!²⁵⁶

The final major step in these negotiations was signed in 1820 at Doak's Stand, a small village located on the Natchez Trace. Already one-third of the Choctaw Nation had moved west, many to the area of Red River where the Wrights and their neighbors were located. But, the rest of the tribe stuck stubbornly to their lands where they had lived in peace with the white man. However, they refused to be swallowed up by the white movement and live under the white laws.

Two principal chiefs, Pushmataha, who had met Claiborne Wright in the War of 1812 in the fight against Chief Weatherford, and Mushalatubbee, a member of one of the oldest families in the Choctaw Nation, put their feelings in emphatic tones:

"We wish to remain here where we have grown up as herbs of the woods, and do not wish to be transplanted into another soil. Those of our people who are over the Mississippi, did not go there with the consent of the Nation; they are considered strangers. . ."²⁵⁷

Jackson sensed he could use this animosity between the factions as a weapon to force the chiefs to change their minds. He hired James Pitchlynn to ride among the Choctaw and use his influence to convert the bulk of the tribe to Mississippi. Pitchlynn told his friends that they could remain and be secure in their homes, but under the laws of the United States, or they could move west and continue their lives of hunters. He added a threat given to him by Jackson, however. Unless they agreed to this proposal, the General would pass a law compelling the members of the tribe in the West to return to their old home, thus overcrowding the existing lands in Mississippi that had shrunk in the past 20 years due to other treaties with the white man.²⁵⁸

Pushmataha and his council fired back quickly at this idea by challenging Jackson to:

"...direct his agents to the West to order these stragglers home, and, if they will not come, to direct them where he pleases. I am well acquainted [said Pushmataha] with the country contemplated for us. I have often had my feet sorely bruised there from the roughness of its surface."²⁵⁹

Robert Cole, Pushmataha and other Choctaw mingos had visited the western country before 1820.²⁶⁰ They already knew white people lived there, especially on the fertile lands. Jackson said simply, the Government would remove the Mississippi Choctaw. He had no compassion, just a desire to complete the

²⁵⁶ Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson And The Course Of American Empire, 1767-1821* (New York, 1977), 398.

removal of the red man.

The Treaty of Doak's Stand was signed on October 18, 1820, after nine days of talks.²⁶¹ Jackson had talked long and demandingly. Pushmataha, who had served with the General in the fight against the Creeks, British and Spanish, spoke impressively, interpreted by Major John Pitchlynn, another acquaintance of Claiborne Wright. Through the 64 year-old Pitchlynn, an Englishman, Pushmataha accused Jackson of betraying the Choctaw about the western lands. He said they were wastelands--poor, sterile and useless.²⁶² The Arkansas Clear Creek settlement would disagree with that, but it would be okay if the chief convinced his tribe that was true!

The pressure and power behind Jackson was too much, however. A long conversation preceded the signing. The chief finally realized he was defeated, and charged that the land offered had many white men already living on it. "Sharpe Knife," as Jackson was sometimes called, used one of his favorite expletives, snapping, "Moonshine!"

Pushmataha came right back at him, through Pitchlynn's efforts, saying, "I beg your pardon, there are many of them. . . and they will not be ordered off."²⁶³

His assumption was wrong, but he knew he had challenged Jackson in the proper way, telling him he would not do something. The General, who was being urged by the white civilization in Mississippi to succeed at all costs, promised to send his own warriors " and "by the eternal, drive them into the Mississippi!"²⁶⁴

If Claiborne had ever read those words, fire would have come from his eyes, making his hair even more red! Instead, a long barrage of letters to the *Arkansas Gazette* by various authors followed over the next five years. The boundary lines would be discussed over and over. Jackson would get his way, finally, but not before much argument and negotiation with the Indians.

If he had left any memoirs, John Pitchlynn could have documented entirely the events that followed, and preceded, Doak's Stand because of his position as interpreter. He was instrumental in the final removal of the Choctaw, although he was not by blood one of them. Some sources like to say he was born on a ship off the Caribbean Island of St. Thomas in 1756. Pitchlynn had been with his father, Isaac, traveling from Washington, D.C. to Natchez, and on to New Orleans. His father died, though, while passing through Choctaw lands in 1765.²⁶⁵ John's mother, who had relatives living in Georgia at the time, had died several years earlier. He had nowhere to go and since the Choctaw had taken to his father, young John decided to live among them for a time.

Soon he began to speak their language and could negotiate with the white man for the tribe. His first efforts recorded by history were at the Treaty of Hopewell. This was the first such treaty between the United States and the Choctaw people, finalized near the Seneca Old Town on the Keowee River, January 3, 1786.²⁶⁶ He acted under the appointment of interpreter for the Nation until 1792. Governor William Blount of the North Carolina Territory southwest of the Ohio River reappointed him for more service at the time.²⁶⁷

Several white men from North Carolina came to the Tombigbee River area to settle in the Nation during the latter part

MISSISSIPPI
(MOST ROADS WERE ORIGINALLY INDIAN TRAILS)
TAKEN FROM 1822 MAP
DEVIL'S BACKBONE
1816 MISS. MAP
COLTON & CO. 1855 MISS. MAP

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lived comfortably on the Noxubee River, a tributary of the Tombigbee, near the present-day location of Macon, Mississippi.

Rhoda died in 1805, and a year later Pitchlynn decided to move to land on a point where the Oktibbeha (Tibbee) Creek joins with the Tombigbee River, about five miles above the present location of Columbus, Mississippi.²⁷¹ The Folsom family again supplied John with a wife, this time she was a daughter of Ebenezer and his first wife, Nitika (Tehani).²⁷² Sophia Folsom was a strong woman, though much younger than her husband. She was 33 at the time the move to the new farm was completed in 1806. Pitchlynn was 17 years her senior.

Sophia was the only child of Ebenezer and Tehani. Unhappy with the marriage, apparently, her father had run away to Arkansas after Sophia's birth, and she was raised by her uncle, Nathaniel, who would eventually have 24 children by his two wives (at the same time). The wives were sisters and cousins of Mushulatubbee.²⁷³ Since Nathaniel already had palsy of the limbs, Sophia spent much of her time helping raise her uncle's family. Add that responsibility to the eight children she and Pitchlynn would have and life was full of pots and pans, clothing and washing! The Pitchlynn influence was spreading, though not always in good face.²⁷⁴

At "Peachland's Ford," as it was eventually called, John Pitchlynn would participate in business and see his place be marked on the map as a major trading post.

His ventures became very profitable and he amassed large herds of cattle and many slaves on improved lands.²⁷⁵ However, he was still called upon to interpret and meet with Choctaw delegations. In the Spring of 1811 he showed his influence by calling the chiefs to join him in opposition to the Shawnee orator, Tecumseh, and his prophet, Seekaboo. They were attempting to unite all tribes against the white man and drive him out to sea.²⁷⁶ Pitchlynn later gave an account of Chief Pushmataha's long and colorful speech to Tecumseh, telling the warrior that the Choctaw had no quarrel with the white man.

Pitchlynn became an interpreter for Colonel John McKee's Choctaw Detachment in the Creek Indian War, where he renewed acquaintance with Claiborne Wright.²⁷⁷ The pair had met earlier after Wright had been down the Mississippi on the steamboat *New Orleans* in 1811. The trail back to Carthage, Tennessee led Wright through Pitchlynn's trading post.²⁷⁸

Unlike Claiborne, Pitchlynn kept fighting in the War of 1812, assisting Colonel Uriah Blue of the 39th United States Infantry on the expedition to Pensacola and later in 1814 and early 1815. John, Jr. most commonly called "Jack," was also a first lieutenant in McKee's command, guided by Pushmataha. Later he served under Colonel Blue, also.²⁷⁹

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Despite the efforts by the Choctaw to assist the Americans, they did not want to sacrifice their way of government and fall under the laws of the United States Government. They resisted bitterly, but knew the end was near. In March 1821, Jackson commissioned Edmund Folsom agent to collect the Choctaw who

wished to migrate west that year and conduct them to their new home.²⁸⁰ However, Folsom reported in the fall that the efforts had been unsuccessful. He said that he was opposed by full bloods, the head men, and the whites living among them, but that he hoped for some success with the half-breeds the next year.²⁸¹

Thus, another treaty was necessary, not because the Choctaws were upset but mainly because, in his hurry to negotiate and finalize the Treaty of Doak's Stand, Jackson had given away a portion of Arkansas not meant for the Indians. The Treaty of 1825 would put an end to all hopes that the land would be saved from Choctaw ownership. Claiborne Wright and the Red River inhabitants were still left west of the boundary line. The white population in Miller County had actually increased since the 1820 treaty, with those immigrants to the area hoping for the best.

The Indians, on the other hand, were not happy either. They protested against the new boundary line because it took land away from them what was previously designated for their people. This all happened even though the Indians appeared in person at the negotiations in Washington D.C., Apuckshunnubbe, Pushmataha, Mushulatubbee, Robert Cole, Nitukechi and David Folsom, son of Nathaniel, led a group of 11 toward the northeast in October, 1824.²⁸² Pitchlynn served as official Choctaw interpreter. It was to be a tragic winter for the Nation. First, in Maysville, Kentucky, on October 13, 1824, the 85 year-old Apuckshunnubbe fell to his death when he dropped over the river abutment to the road below.²⁸³ The delegation was fed and given plenty of whisky and wine the entire trip, a ploy the Government thought would soften them to their way of thinking.

Cole, a full-blood Choctaw, took the old chief's place as an official member of the delegation, representing the Upper Town District. Finally, the group arrived in Washington, but found even more social events planned for them, and less satisfactory talk on the subject at hand. They met frequently with President James Monroe and other governmental officials, seeking also to obtain a settlement called the "net proceeds," as promised in the 1820 treaty.²⁸⁴

Pushmataha, Pitchlynn and the others attended great dinners with champagne flowing freely. Strong personalities were present. At one, Pushmataha met Lafayette and was flowing with admiration for the "one who had come a long way to assist our friends of the white race. . . ." ²⁸⁵ He went on, toasting the Frenchman, "This is our last meeting on earth. Soon, the great ocean will divide us. We shall see each other no more til we meet in the happy hunting ground."

Sadly, Pushmataha would find those grounds more quickly than Lafayette. The highly seasoned food and the big menu of Champagne and whiskey were too much for the legendary chief, who always told long tales of his creation for the amusement of audiences.²⁸⁶ A letter was written by David Folsom back to the Nation:

"I take up my pen to inform you that Chief Pushmataha is no more. He died last night [December 23, 1824] at 12 o'clock. . . ." ²⁸⁷

Sobered by the events, the Choctaw delegation signed a new treaty on January 20, 1825, commonly called The Treaty of

Washington, and headed on home.²⁸⁸ The white settlers had lost their fight for lands--and so had the Choctaw. Neither party was pleased. Preparations were to begin for removal although several years were to pass before the entire tribe would go west.²⁸⁹

Pitchlynn also was tired of the efforts.²⁹⁰ But he would be ready by the next fall to accompany a party of surveyors led by United States Commissioner Henry D. Downs of Mississippi and J.S. Conway, surveyor. Major Pitchlynn and [Thomas ?] Wall were the Choctaw commissioners on the trip, which began at Fort Smith November 2, 1825.²⁹¹

By January 7, 1826, Pitchlynn had seen 60-80 white families west of the line in Crawford County, Arkansas, and noticed that all but 8-12 families in Miller County were west of where the survey fell. But one great shock greeted Pitchlynn as he traveled through the Clear Creek settlement, north of Jonesborough. He ran into Claiborne Wright!²⁹²

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By now Pitchlynn was thinking perhaps he might remain in Mississippi. He had influenced and befriended many people in his life, including Governor William C.C. Claiborne, Samuel Mitchell, Jackson and a host of settlers and traders who had come through Pitchlynn's place on the Tombigbee.²⁹³

One settler he had met was a cousin. In 1818, Gideon Lincecum, after finishing his new house, three miles above present Columbus and opposite Pitchlynn's, went over the Tombigbee to see the Choctaws, about two miles away. While there he ran into John Pitchlynn:

"He had a large family of half-breed children; was very wealthy; sixty-two years of age; possessed a high order of intelligence and was from every point of view, a clever gentleman. . ."²⁹⁴

Lincecum and Pitchlynn visited. When the younger man gave his name and said that he had lived in Georgia, Pitchlynn exclaimed, "What is the name of your father?" Puzzled by the question, Lincecum replied, "It is Hezekiah Lincecum."

"Don't they call him Ky," Pitchlynn asked. Lincecum returned, "His familiar friends do." At this Pitchlynn said, "I am a second cousin to your mother. I will go right over and see them this day!"

Lincecum wrote in his autobiographical notes that Pitchlynn was "in perfect ecstasy." He should have been. The Major had not seen his mother's cousin, Sally Hickman Lincecum, in many years.²⁹⁵ On a trip to Washington over 25 years earlier, Pitchlynn had traveled through Georgia, finding the Lincecums in residence near what is today Athens. All he knew was that his mother had relatives in that state. Pitchlynn was on his way to testify in the William Bount Conspiracy and by chance located Sally and Hezekiah. He visited with them a month, but that was before Gideon was born.²⁹⁶

The Lincecum and the Bowie families had been neighbors in North Carolina. In fact, Gideon's grandmother was Miriam Bowie, aunt to the future hero of the Alamo in Texas, Jim Bowie. As far as Pitchlynn knew, he too was kin to the Bowies. Isaac

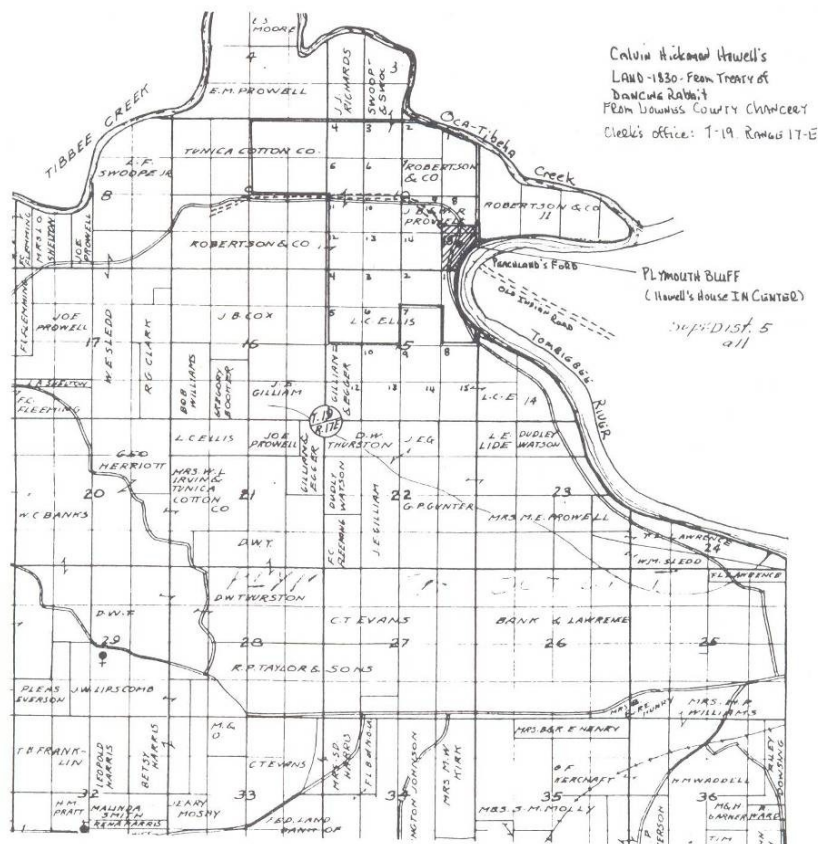
Pitchlynn left little for his son to work with so far as family history was concerned. But, he did know that his mother was a Hickman.²⁹⁷ And, he met another cousin the same year in the Tombigbee area. Calvin Hickman Howell, 19, arrived, also migrating to Mississippi, via New Orleans, from North Carolina. He found "Peachland's" an interesting place to live, so he stayed. Like Lincecum, he was interested in becoming a physician.²⁹⁸

But, unlike Lincecum, Howell would strike up an affair with one of Pitchlynn's family. He would eventually marry Rhoda, the second daughter of Major Pitchlynn and Sophia, on January 15, 1828.²⁹⁹

Pitchlynn was near the end of this business life now. He had a long partnership with George S. Gaines, shipping goods down to Fort St. Stephens when Spain held the port at Mobile.³⁰⁰ This was before 1812. Gaines would ship his goods from Colbert's Ferry on the Tennessee River at Muscle Shoals overland to Cotton Gin Port, then on to Pitchlynn's.

For a number of years, Pitchlynn had operated a ferry at "Peachland's Ford," assisting the crossing of the Tombigbee at his settlement. He also was involved in a stage line operation with Robert Jamison. But, by 1828, he was ready for a move. He turned over the ferry rights and the land nearby to his son-in-law, Calvin Howell, and moved to a location just north of Robinson Road.

Location of John Pitchlynn & Calvin Howell Land in Lowndes County, Townsites 19, Range 17-E, Northwest of Columbus.



Howell began preparations for the incorporation of a town

to be called Plymouth, located on the Pitchlynn land near the mouth of the Tibbee.³⁰¹ Pitchlynn dedicated his time to farming while his sons Peter, James, Joseph and Jack were creating their own home environments.

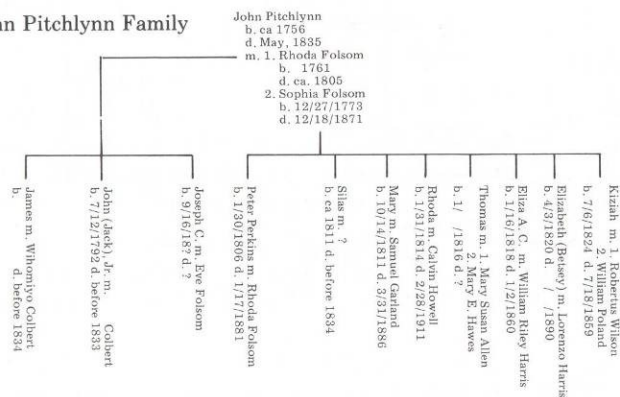
The land titles to their improvements and claims depended upon one more and final Choctaw treaty, this time at Dancing Rabbit Creek.³⁰² The Indians were now led by Peter Pitchlynn, their chairman, and were still being tough on the sale of the lands granted to them under Doak's Stand. The Choctaws were bluffing, however, for they knew the end was near-they must leave Mississippi to survive, as a tribe.

Major John H. Eaton and Colonel John Coffee, commissioners for President Jackson, informed the Choctaw delegation that they must move west immediately or live under the laws of the State of Mississippi.³⁰³ If they resisted, the armed might of the United States would completely destroy them in a few weeks!

For the first time a majority of the Choctaws realized that a westward trip was just over the horizon. The last session of Dancing Rabbit was held on September 26, 1830, and signings were completed on the 28th. The Choctaws did secure a perpetual guarantee of their new home and certain land and money agreements, but they failed to get all the land given to them in 1820. This satisfied many whites in Arkansas, but the agreement continued to leave Miller County's west end as Indian Property north of the Red River.³⁰⁴

As a result of the 1830 treaty, the Pitchlynn family was land rich.³⁰⁵ Most was title to land they already had, but if they wanted to stay in Mississippi, they easily could. It was a hard decision for John Pitchlynn to make. He not only had three young daughters in his house, he also would have four grandsons under his guardianship shortly after the 1830 treaty was signed.³⁰⁶ It would not be an easy move.

Chart of John Pitchlynn Family



Fortune had smiled on Pitchlynn all these years. He had lived in the best of two worlds among the Indians and the advancing white civilization. The next five years of his life would not be so happy. His fourteen-room house would be empty in just five tragedy-filled years.³⁰⁷



Sophia Folsom Pitchlynn
1773-1871
"Loved But Lost"

Painted by Brunetta Griffith

6

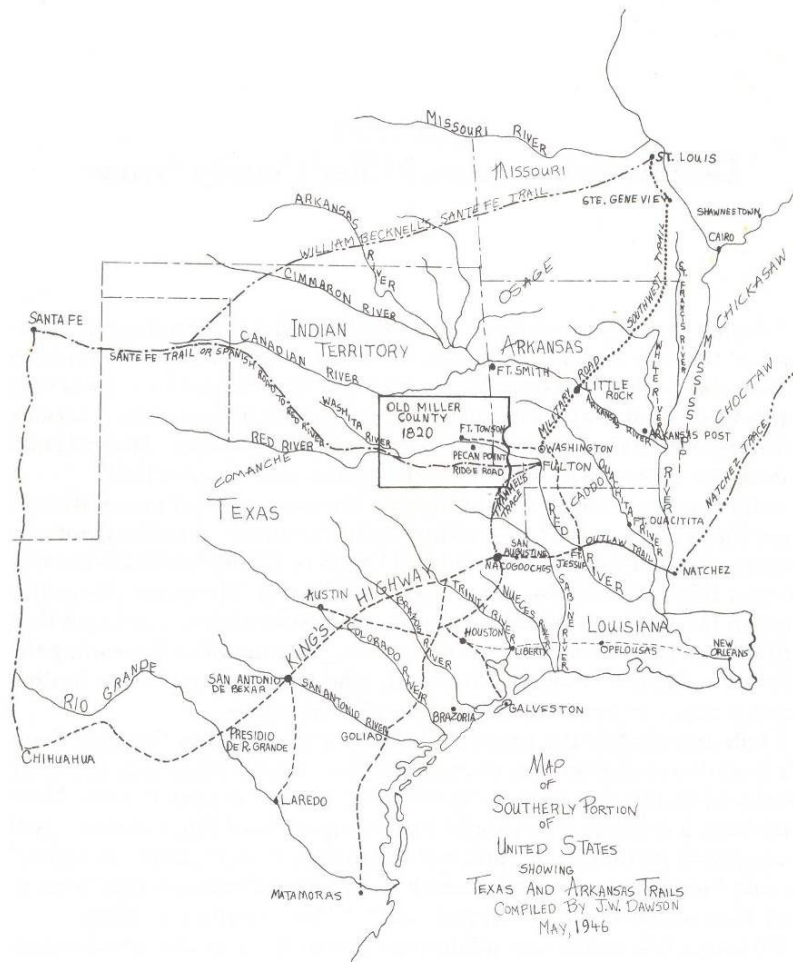
1820-1827

Despite Adversities, Miller County Grows

Discussion of the various Indian treaties picked up as the influence of Little Rock's *Arkansas Gazette* began more and more circulation to the Territory's western counties. Publisher William Woodruff had little trouble finding readers, just paper to print enough pages to carry the news traffic.³⁰⁸

Although the Indian negotiations were always miles away, the decisions severely affected the settlers in what was now being called Miller County, Arkansas. The Territory of Arkansas had been created on March 2, 1819, when President James Monroe signed the papers and assigned James Miller to serve as the first governor.³⁰⁹ Settlers in the Red River Valley area, especially those living on the south side of the river, had mixed feelings about the involvement with the United States again. From a law and order standpoint, they felt belonging to the Territory would be a plus. However, from a land acquisition viewpoint, it would be easier to work with the Spanish, and later the Mexicans, obtaining new grants and settlements.

Whatever their desires, the Indian negotiations were out of their hands. Even as a Territory, Arkansas voters would still be unable to vote for the presidential candidates. Thus, they would have little influence on the events that would follow, despite what Claiborne and others thought about James Woodson Bates' abilities as a delegate to Congress. The events following the Choctaw negotiations caused uproar among Miller County residents, but it was barely heard 1,400 miles away in Washington City. Many Miller Countians would eventually migrate on south, some as far as Stephen F. Austin's colony in southeast Texas. Claiborne Wright had consulted with Austin earlier about the advisability of forming his colony in northeast Texas. His advice to Austin was followed. The settlement went south.³¹⁰



The Red River Valley, from Mound Prairie, Arkansas to the mouth of the Kiamichi, was all included in the County of Hempstead in 1819. There were only five such counties in Arkansas Territory then.³¹¹ Therefore, when elections for the Legislative Council and the House of Representatives were called, most of the votes came from the eastern end of the county where there were more settlers near Washington, Arkansas. No one from Pecan Point was elected to that first session at the Arkansas Post. However, the families in Northeast Texas and Southeast Oklahoma had, as a majority, moved from the settlements near Washington. Therefore, through their former neighbors who were in attendance at the General Assembly, the desires of the western inhabitants were heard. With their help, Miller County was formed out of Hempstead.³¹²

The new county would have indefinite boundary lines on the west and would have a northern boundary line that would cover most of present-day southeastern Oklahoma. The southern border was always disputed between the Mexican government and the United States. It never was actually designated until about 1838, when the Republic of Texas laid claim to land to the Red River, and Arkansas acquiesced. By 1838 the population of the Red River Valley in Texas was rather large. But, in 1821, when Miller County was just beginning its life as a part of Arkansas, the

population was only 999 residents, 84 of whom were Negro slaves.³¹³

By 1820 Claiborne's home was being surrounded by inhabited areas--Clear Creek Settlement on the west, Jonesborough to the southwest and the town he helped found, and name, Shawneetown, to the northeast.³¹⁴ Being so situated, it was only natural that he volunteer the structure for use as the Miller County Court House after the creation of the county. It was his way of continuing his interest in law enforcement after a year's service as a justice of the peace.³¹⁵ Actually, the act creating the new county called for John Hall's home in the Gelleland [Gilliland] Settlement, near the site of the future military installation, Cantonment Towson, to be used as the Court House.³¹⁶

Hall was not particularly fond of this idea, and was away when the settlers met at Claiborne's home on July 23, 1821 for the first recorded Court of Common Pleas in Miller County. An act passed in the Fall of 1820, calling for election of commissioners "to select and choose the most suitable and convenient place for a county seat" had stated an election was to be held to choose these men on August 6, 1821.³¹⁷ Miller County's concerned politicians and inhabitants jumped the gun and, since the legislative document creating the county said the court should meet in March, July and December of each year, they wanted to stay on schedule.

Abram Sanders, William Brice and William Hanks were chosen judges. Bailey English was elected sheriff and Robert C. Oden rode into the county. He would serve as the prosecuting attorney for the second judicial district of the Superior Court of the Territory of Arkansas. John Clark was appointed by the court to serve as county clerk. A grand jury was empanelled and the start of seven years of court at Claiborne's home was relatively calm. No criminal cases were tried at this term.³¹⁸

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The Treaty of Doak's Stand, unknown to even American negotiators, gave away almost half of Arkansas to Pushmataha and his fellow chiefs and negotiators.³¹⁹ Under these terms, the eastern boundary line in 1820 would have run from Fulton, Arkansas, a town established in 1819 by Stephen F. Austin and his brother-in-law, James Bryan, to Lewisburg, near the Arkansas River and Point Remove Creek Junction. From there the line would follow northeastwardly to Batesville on the White River. This action, when news of it arrived in Arkansas, set off quite a furor!

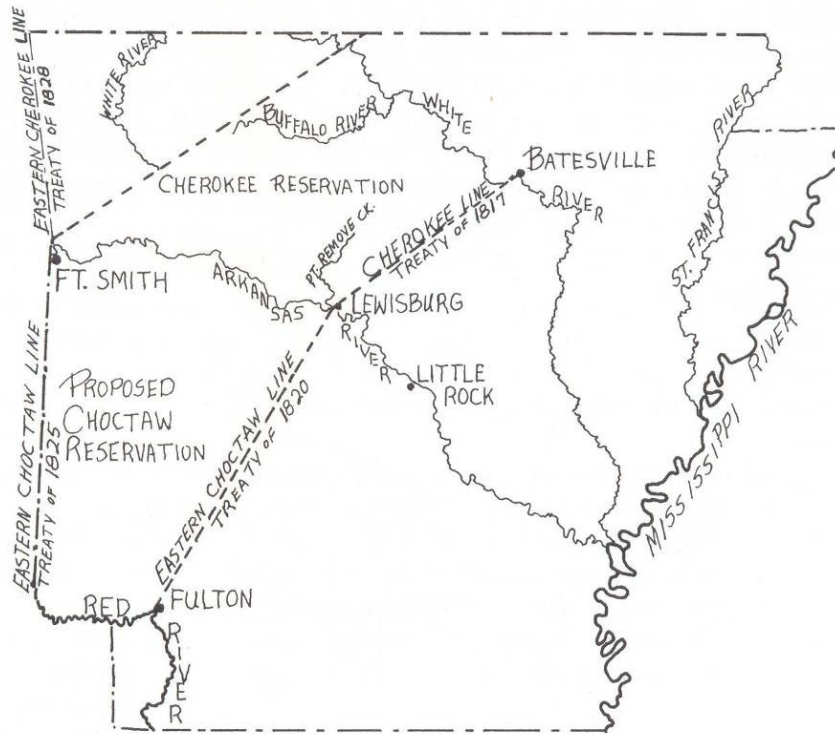
A protest in the form of a Memorial to the President by the Citizens of the Territory of Arkansas was sent in early 1821, pointing out that the settlers had moved to the western portion of Arkansas with the promise that the land would be theirs:

" . . . we reflect that our frontier settlements were made under the circumstances which entitled them to anticipate the usual indulgence, and benevolent protection of our government, hitherto extended to other sections of the United States. . . "³²⁰

The signers encouraged the President to prevent ratification of the Treaty as written. The Memorial was signed by

367 of the citizens of Arkansas, including many current and future Red River settlers, such as John and Wiley Fowler, Claiborne Wright, Thomas Denton, Gabriel Martin, Adam Lawrence, James Clark, Bailey English and Martin Varner.

While further negotiations went on in Washington City and in Mississippi to correct the mistake, some disgruntled Choctaws were resigning themselves to the inevitable sad facts of life and heading west, hoping to claim the best pieces of land. Once there, they quickly found that the whites had already claimed what few good farming lands were available in their section of Indian Territory.



CHEROKEE AND CHOCTAW LANDS AND BOUNDARIES

George Wright remembered in his Memoirs the first influx of that tribe:

"In 1820 and '21 the Choctaws made frequent inroads upon the sparsely settled portions and succeeded in stealing almost all the horses that were in the country and left the people to make corn with the hoes entirely but there seemed to be plenty that year and in the summer of '20 the mexicans sent a command from Nacogdoches to clear the country of all the white population on the Red River. . . "321

The settlers were being assaulted from all directions! The native Texas Indians were also causing trouble, convincing the Mexican government that the land should be theirs. Despite the negative efforts, this movement failed to keep the settlers from continuing the work of improving the land on the south bank.

However, George mentions in the next paragraph of his

writings that in 1821, or earlier (probably in the Fall, 1819), Captain Robert L. Coomb of the United States Army at Fort Jessup burned all the houses above the mouth of the "Kiamichia," on both sides of the [Red] River, lying west of the whole country.³²² Coomb was following orders given by Major William Bradford of Fort Smith to remove the settlers who had stayed after Bradford's trip a year earlier. In that incursion, the Major and a half-dozen soldiers, accompanied by the botanist, Thomas Nuttall, and two Cherokees, set out on May 16, 1819. They found over 200 families west of a line drawn from the mouth of the Kiamichi River to the Poteau.

³²² *Ibid.*, The settlers had been told not to make improvements west of the Kiamichi River. The orders actually came from *Secretary of War John C. Calhoun* through General Andrew Jackson, then commanding officer of the Southern Division of the United States Army. He told Major William Bradford at Ft. Smith, Arkansas, in May 1819, that the "illegal" settlers must be removed. Most simply went on south. Though vague and pertaining more to East Texas and the Sabine River, the 1820 Treaty of Adams-Onís had made it fairly certain those lands south of the Red River were in Spanish Texas, beyond control of the American military. See also, Strickland, *Chronicles*, XVIII, 28, and Jeannette E. Graustein, *Thomas Nuttall, Naturalist: Explorations in America, 1808-1841* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 422, fn. 20.

¹ A.W. Neville, *History of Lamar County* (Paris, 1937), 239. The most accurate and really, only historian Lamar County has had, uses this date as the arrival time and March 5, 1816 as the departure date from Carthage, Tennessee. There is no indication where Neville read these dates. Probably he read a copy of a George W. Wright article published in 1874 in the *Austin Intelligencer-Echo* where the March 5 date is given. Most likely he heard of them from Thomas Eddie Brazelton, husband of George Wright's daughter, Bettie. He might have read them in Mrs. James Joyce Arthur's, *Annals Of The Fowler Family* (Austin, 1900), Appendix. Here, Mrs. Arthur places what she says is an article George Wright wrote for an old Texas newspaper found in A.J. Fowler's "family scrapbook." Research has failed to find this article, even in the *Littleton Fowler Papers* at the Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas. In this article, it says Claiborne Wright, George's father, left on March 5, 1816. However, in the next paragraph, errors crop up—"two daughters and four sons (Travis, George W., Columbus and Alexander)." There was one daughter, no Columbus, and Alexander was born in Texas.

Most likely, Glenn Dora Arthur, or her father, A.J. Fowler, had a short description of what George Wright (or perhaps John Hopkins Fowler, A.J.'s brother) later called, *A Visit Through Texas in 1817*. The Fowlers and the Wright's were first cousins, Claiborne and Clara Fowler being brother and sister. In *Visit Through Texas* there is never a mention of a departure or arrival date. It is assumed George Wright wrote this nearly 100-page account after the Civil War. The first item written from it is found in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXVII, (September, 1893), 563. In an article, entitled "Texas," by ex-Senator Samuel Bell Maxey, a footnote reads:

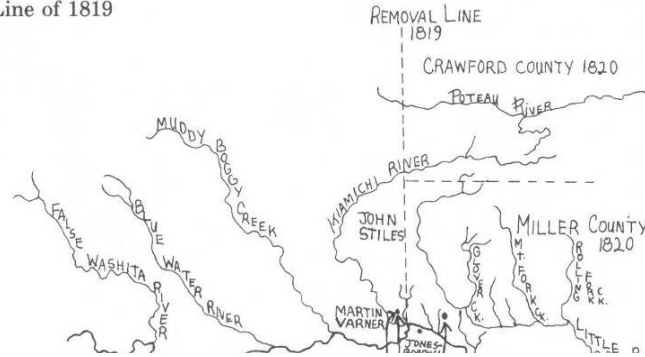
"I have a most interesting manuscript account of them [the nucleuses of North Texas settlements] written by the late Judge George W. Wright, an honored citizen of this place (Paris, Texas) whose father, Claiborne Wright, settled when the judge was a boy, at Pecan Point in 1816. Judge Wright's son, James H. Wright, has kindly placed this manuscript in my possession. I am also indebted to Mrs. Isabella Gordon of Clarksville, Red River County, one of the early settlers, for valuable information."

The manuscript was found April 17, 1936 in General Maxey's papers at his home, now a museum. Neville used it in his research.

The manuscript says the family came in 1817, but as this book will reveal, there is much evidence that it was 1816. George was either off on the date, or if Fowler wrote it, he refers to his first arrival in the Red River Valley in 1817.

² *Tillson-Mary Vivian Daniel (MVD) Papers*, Book No.3, 10-11. Hardy is the only one of the three slaves that is mentioned later in the lives of the Wright

Removal Line of 1819



family. Mary Daniel, a grand daughter of George Wright, spent a lifetime studying the genealogy of the Wright family. Her notes were scattered across the country after her death in 1960, but most were recovered from relatives and copied.

³ William Fowler Wright, born December 5, 1802, was named after Claiborne's father and his sister's husband, Godfrey Fowler; Henrietta was named after Claiborne's mother, Henrietta Claiborne; Travis was named after Betty, whose maiden name was Travis; George Washington was named after the president, but possibly the family was a member of that line, on Claiborne's side; and Adam Marley was named for a close friend in Smith County, Tennessee. See *Mary Vivian Daniel [MVD] Papers*, Genealogical Charts, 15, and Smith County, Tennessee, *Deed Book C*, 174.

⁴ Hubert Humphreys, "Photographic Views Of Red River Raft, 1873," *Louisiana History*, XII (1971), 102. The Raft was an ever-shifting series of logjams that clogged the main channel of Red River for more than a hundred miles, beginning near where modern day Campti, Louisiana is located.

⁵ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 12. Miss Daniel, in her narrative, says the Indians stole the boat, then sank it in quicksand. Neville, *History Of Lamar County*, 239, says the voyage had weakened its timbers, and its work was done. The family lore tends to lean toward the MVD story. MVD has Claiborne calling Elizabeth by both Betsy and Betty. She will be referred to as Betty in this account because George Wright called his daughter "Bettie," even though her name was Sarah Elizabeth.

⁶ "This account will use the spelling "Claiborne" although it is clear that Wright spelled his name mostly "Clayborn." On one document alone, it is spelled that way and "Claybourn." See *Marguerite Smith Moses Papers* (Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, Washington, Arkansas), letter from Justice of Peace Wright to constable of Saline Township, Hempstead County, Arkansas, and a document appealing a judgment on a debt.

⁷ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 7. Also, Smith County, Tennessee, *Deed Book B*, 45. Godfrey Fowler bought for \$84 a tract out of the Mann Phillips grant totaling 100 acres, from James Bellow, on November 13, 1800. He added another 80 acres when he bought that tract from David Rorex for \$30 on September 22, 1804. *Ibid.*, 299. Then, on July 19, 1807, Fowler sold 170 acres on Dixon's Creek for \$450 to Jacob Uhls. Later, in *Deed Book D*, 39, he is recorded as selling the final 10 acres on July 26, 1810 to Gidian Gifford. Fowler had been very active in Smith County government until about 1804. He was a county commissioner for a year, meeting in a house that lies on Hwy. 25 from Gallatin to Carthage--the Tilman Dixon House--still standing in 1982. See Smith County, Tennessee *Minute Book* 1799-1814.

⁸ *George Travis Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies (typed versions of what is on file at the Barker Archives, University of Texas, Austin), Steely files, 3. "Claiborne Wright was remembered by some of the "Old Timers" as being well over six feet tall, red headed, quick tempered and not afraid of the devil" Unsigned. See also, *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No. 3, 14. MVD says a friend wrote of Claiborne Wright:

" . . . was six feet two inches tall, well built and of great physical strength. He had. . . a keen sense of humor, was an entertaining speaker. . . . He was well-educated and his family adored him."

Many of these families were in the midst of growing crops for the year. Some were on the dividing line, living on Gates Creek and near the Kiamichi River.³²³ Most were not happy when Bradford arrived after a six-day trip described in detail by Nuttall in his journal. The first to hear the bad news was William Stiles. He was an early immigrant who arrived only shortly before with his family and his blind, 90 year-old mother-in-law.³²⁴

After breakfast at the Stiles' home, Major Bradford pressed on to the mouth of the Kiamichi River. "The people appeared but [they were] ill prepared for the unpleasant official intelligence of their ejectment," Nuttall wrote on the night of May 22, 1819.³²⁵

His size grew, as legend had him 6-10 at one time! However, it is possible he was large, for many relatives are well over 6-4 and 6-5, with curly red hair.

⁹ 'Smith County, Tennessee, *Minute Book 1808-1811*, 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹² *Ibid.*, 41. On page 43 Canaday was indicted again but no results were found.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Southerlin v. Smith, June 8, 1808, 91; Jackson v. McGee, June 10, 1808, 112; and State v. James Walton, December 8, 1808, 221.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 282.

¹⁶ This is not true, necessarily. The *Court Minute Book* from 1811-1813 was not available at the Tennessee State Library Archives and Manuscript Division and the reception of researchers is so poor at the Smith County Court House in Carthage that little could be found there. The book, by the looks of the Clerk's office in Carthage, was probably lost many years ago; therefore, cases in those two years are not available.

¹⁸ J.H. B. Latrobe, *First Steamboat Voyage On The Western Waters* (Baltimore, 1871), 33. Roosevelt was born in New York City on December 27, 1767. He died on July 30, 1854. He was the son of Jacob and Annette Bogard Roosevelt.

¹⁹ William F. Petersen, *Steam boating On Upper Mississippi* (Des Moines, Iowa, 1937), 54-56. Ray Samuel, Leonard V. Huber, Warren C. Ogden, *Tales Of The Mississippi* (New York, 1975), 25. Nicholas and his wife, Lydia, traveled aboard an especially built flat boat, beginning in May 1809. They observed the river and questioned local boatmen on the way to New Orleans. Then, from Natchez to New Orleans, they traveled by rowboat to study the currents, bars and banks of the lower river. They arrived in New Orleans on December 1, 1809.

²⁰ Charles Henry Ambler, *Transportation In The Ohio Valley* (Glendale, California, 1932), 113. Samuel, Huber, Ogden, *Tales*, 25. They were granted an 18-year monopoly by Governor W.C. C. Claiborne and the Louisiana Legislature. Gov. Claiborne mentioned to the Legislature on March 18, 1811, that he had traveled through the Middle and Northern states the summer before, noticing this new and useful mode of navigation. On April 26, he wrote Fulton stating that he and Livingston would have "sole privilege of using Steam boats for a limited time in this Territory. . ." See Dunbar Rowland (ed), *Official Letter Books of W.C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816*, V (Jackson, Mississippi, 1917), 185 and 220.

²¹ Ambler, *Transportation*, 114. All this move did, however, was revive the long, drawn out fight for freedom of the western waterways.

²² *Ibid.*, 116. She was 138 1/2 feet long, 26 1/2 feet of beam and cost approximately \$40,000. Samuel, Huber, Ogden, *Tales*, 26, says 148 1/2 feet long, 32 1/2 feet wide and with a draft of 12 feet.

²³ *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁴ Petersen, *Steamboating*, 65-66. Roosevelt would be honored again years later. In 1911 his grandniece, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, daughter of Theodore Roosevelt, christened a "quaint" little New Orleans, which had been

Several families had lived in this disputed area for over a year and had cleared considerable land for cultivation. They thought the idea of moving was preposterous. One of the commissioners chosen to treat with the Choctaw was their friend Andrew Jackson. Many had served with him in the War of 1812. But, the settlers had no idea he, Colonel John McKee, Choctaw Agent, and Colonel Daniel Burnett, a Mississippi state senator, planned to offer the Indians a tract of country west of Arkansas--their lands. Jackson had given Bradford orders to remove the "squatters" even before he was appointed commissioner, foreseeing this as an incentive to convince the Choctaw to remove west.³²⁶

constructed by the City of Pittsburgh.

²⁵ Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats On Western Rivers* (New York, 1969), 129, and Samuel, Huber, Ogden, *Tales*, 26.

²⁶ There are conflicting views on the size as well as whether the *New Orleans* was a side or stern wheeler. The replica was a side-wheeler, according to Samuel, Huber and Ogden, *Tales*, 28.

²⁷ Judith St. George, *The Amazing Voyage Of The New Orleans* (Toronto, 1980), 62. Baker and Lydia's maid would marry in Natchez.

²⁸ 'Samuel, Huber, Ogden, *Tales*, 26. Roosevelt would find that the falls below Louisville were impassable at the lower level, and he would have to wait until the rains came. In the meantime, he would run excursions back to Cincinnati.

²⁹ 'St. George, *Amazing Voyage*, 30. There was a mile long waterfront of homes, most in the location called Shippingport. Arthur E. Hopkins, "Steamboats At Louisville And On The Ohio And Mississippi Rivers," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, XVII, No.3 (Louisville, 1943), 145. The *New Orleans* dropped anchor off the foot of Fifth Street. Louisville stretched its 1,357 population from what became 12th Street inland to Jefferson Street.

³⁰ Petersen, *Steamboating*, 60. The comet had been in the sky for several days.

³¹ "It is speculation that Claiborne Wright met Roosevelt, but highly possible since Wright was on the rivers so often. St. George, *Amazing Voyage*, 13, says Roosevelt was in Louisville three weeks in 1809, giving both of them a period of time to meet.

³² Petersen, *Steamboating*, 60.

³³ Ambler, *Transportation*, 122.

³⁴ Hopkins, *Filson Club Quarterly*, XVII, No.3, 145.

³⁵ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.1, Section II, 4. MVD says that friends had to urge Claiborne to travel with the *New Orleans* to deliver some goods for them. Evidence of this trip was in a letter from Travis Wright to a Maclin relative describing the trip as told to him by Claiborne, years earlier. The letter, in 1930, was in the ownership of Mrs. RD. (Bonnie) Bowen of New Orleans, granddaughter of Travis, daughter of Sam Wright. MVD asked for a copy to be mailed her in Paris, but Mrs. Bowen died shortly afterwards. The letter is assumed lost or destroyed. No relatives know who received Mrs. Bowen's possessions.

³⁶ Petersen, *Steam boating*, 60. The *New Orleans* could carry 60-80 cabin and steerage passengers.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁸ St. George, *Amazing Voyage*, 15. Lydia was married to Roosevelt on November 15, 1808. She was sixteen, he was 40. The son born in Louisville was named Henry Latrobe Roosevelt, born October 30, 1811. See also, Latrobe, *First Steamboat Voyage*, 9, and Samuel, Huber, Ogden, *Tales*, 25. Lydia was the daughter of Benjamin H.B. Latrobe and sister to J.H.B. Latrobe.

³⁹ Petersen, *Steamboating*, 61, and Samuel, Huber, Ogden, *Tales*, 28. They say two "rapids" pilots were engaged to stand at the bow. One could possibly have been Claiborne Wright.

⁴⁰ St. George, *Amazing Voyage*, 37.

Bradford and the party resumed their mission on the twenty-third, meeting the Red River at the mouth of the Kiamichi, some five or six miles from the Stiles farm.³²⁷ The next day, May 24, they headed west across the Horse Prairie, reaching "Mr. [Martin] Varner's, where we breakfasted, and at length arriving at our destination on the banks of the Red River . . . 15 miles above the mouth of the Kiamesha."³²⁸ Varner accepted the news. He let it drift in one ear and out the other and, simply volunteered to show the group around.

The settlers had been so congenial, in fact, that Bradford decided to give them until October so that they might gather and

⁴¹ Petersen, *Steamboating*, 63.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Samuel, Huber, Ogden, *Tales*, 31, and *Kentucky Gazette* (Lexington), February 4, 1812, 3:3.

⁴⁴ Ambler, *Transportation*, 123.

⁴⁵ James Penick, Jr., *The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-1812* (Rolla, Missouri, 1976), 1. *Kentucky Gazette*, January 14, 1812, 3:2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2. Bradbury was in the vicinity of the second Chickasaw Bluff, above the future site of Memphis.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 6. Jared Brooks, a Louisville engineer and surveyor, counted a total of 1,874 shocks from December 16, 1811 until March 15, 1812. He classified eight as violent, ten as severe. The shocks were felt as far away as New Orleans, Chicago and Pittsburgh.

⁵⁰ *Kentucky Gazette*, February 4, 1812, 3:3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3:4.

⁵² *Ibid.*, January 14, 1812, 3:4. This was an extract of a letter from a gentleman on his way to New Orleans, to a friend in Lexington-dated December 20, 1811.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, December 24, 1811, 3:2.

⁵⁴ Penick, *New Madrid Earthquakes*, 84. Also, Samuel, Huber, Ogden, *Tales*, 31, and *Kentucky Gazette*, January 14, 1812, 3:2. "The inhabitants of Little Prairie Caruthersville. . . all deserted their homes and retired back to the swamps."

⁵⁵ *Kentucky Gazette*, January 14, 1812, 3:2.

⁵⁶ Isabel McLennan McMeekin, *Louisville: The Gateway City* (New York, 1946), 50. Several publications reported religious revival because of the Quake. "Many of the citizens of Louisville, sinner and saints alike, witnessing this marvel dropped to their knees and prayed the good Lord for deliverance. . ." See also, Dr. Walter N. Vernon, *William Stevenson, Riding Preacher* (Dallas, 1964), 35, and Penick, *New Madrid Earthquakes*, 85.

⁵⁷ Petersen, *Steamboating*, 64.

⁵⁸ Penick, *New Madrid Earthquakes*, 85.

⁵⁹ J.F.H. Claiborne, *Mississippi As A Province, Territory And State*, I (Baton Rouge, 1964), 333. F.L. Claiborne moved to Natchez in 1805, entering the mercantile and agricultural business. He was elected to the Mississippi legislature soon afterwards, presiding over that body's deliberations.

⁶⁰ Petersen, *Steam boating*, 65. Arrived January 10. The same date is given in Rowland, *Letter Books*, VI, 41n; but Samuel, Huber and Ogden, *Tales*, 31, say it was January 12.

⁶¹ Rowland, *Letter Books*, VI, 1-2 and 40-41. Governor Claiborne had been notified by Livingston back in December that the boat was coming. On January

collect their crops. Bradford began his return on May 27 sans Nuttall, who dallied at the area to do research. He lost the party and as night approached, he had ". . . the good fortune to arrive at the house of Mr. [Daniel] Davis, contiguous to Gates' Creek."³²⁹ Nuttall eventually made his way back to Fort Smith, in better shape than the Kiamichi settlers would be in the upcoming Fall.

For some reason, Capt. Coomb arrived in the Kiamichi River area later and drove out the families who had remained to harvest their crops. He overdid the task, burning houses on both sides of the Red River west of the Kiamichi.³³⁰ This highly upset the settlers of Pecan Point and vicinity, . . . to put it mildly! George Wright describes the incident:

26, 1812, Claiborne wrote, "I take great pleasure in enclosing for your perusal an official report made to me as to the progress thro' the water of the Steam Bo'at *New Orleans*, lately arrived at this port. . . ." He envisioned in his letter great things to be done with steam power.

⁶² Petersen, *Steamboating*, 65. The steamboat profited to the tune of \$20,000 that first year. Ambler, *Transportation*, 124. Roosevelt left the vessel in Baker's hands to run the trade route to Natchez.

⁶³ _____, "A Tour In 1807 Down The Cumberland," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, V (Knoxville, 1919), 65. Dr. Claiborne came to Nashville about 1801, married Sarah Lewis, had three children, joined in a tour of the South in 1807, built the first brick office house in Nashville and organized one of the earliest literary clubs of the town. Also, Claiborne, *Mississippi*, 250. W.C.C. Claiborne went to Philadelphia at age 16 and gained employment with the Clerk of the House of Representatives. He studied law during the next several years. In 1795, he moved to Tennessee, opening an office in Sullivan County. A year later he was a delegate from Sullivan County at the constitutional convention. He became a judge of the Superior Court and in 1797, was elected to Congress as a representative and was re-elected until 1801, when he was commissioned Governor of Mississippi. He arrived in Natchez November 23, 1801, and ran that Territorial government until he and General James Wilkinson were both appointed as commissioners to receive the province of Louisiana from the French. On March 5, 1805, Claiborne was appointed Governor of the Territory of Orleans.

⁶⁴ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.1, Section II, 4. There is no data on the background of Elizabeth Travis. MVD says there was controversy as to which Travis family she belonged. "One research worker in Virginia thought there was a good deal in favor of her line being the Champion Travis family of James City County, Virginia. Another that she was related to William Barrett Travis, of Alamo fame. The third thought that impossible because Claiborne Wright never was in South Carolina where the Barrett and Mark Travis families lived in a Baptist settlement," wrote MVD about 1948. However, Claiborne's love to move constantly proves these researchers wrong. See file Helen Kirkendall and correspondence from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. She has a 4-great grandfather named Claiborne who is in Chester County, South Carolina—will signed in 1824.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ See footnote 8. If Claiborne had been much larger, accounts would have been written of his size, especially if he approached 6'-10."

⁶⁸ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No. 3, 7.

⁶⁹ Smith County, Tennessee *Minute Book*, 1813-1815, 73 (John Towler v. Joel Towler, December 31, 1813) and State v. Jeremiah Bowen, August 10, 1814.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 71, and *Deed Book C* (1807-1811), 400. To heirs of William Sullivan, 1810, Lee, William (Willie), James, Edward and Samuel.

⁷² Smith County, Tennessee *Deed Book D* (1811-1814), 326.

⁷³ Smith County, Tennessee, *Minute Book*, 1813-1815, 191. This was made on May 14, 1814. Peter, John and Jacob Hubbard, executors, together with

"This was an unexpected blow and it came from a country of which we expected protection. The Capt. had to make his Retreat the best way he could down the River and his company of men gave him protection. . ."³³¹

The settlers, who had formed a makeshift militia, headed out after the soldiers. They followed them all the way by land to the head of the Raft to find a chance to shoot Coomb:

". . . but he would not show himself at all out of the boat and while they were following Combs the indians came down upon their families and made havoc among those who were in camps

Claiborne Wright and William Vaden, entered bond in sum of \$10,000.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁷⁵ *Steely Papers*, Claiborne Wright Tennessee Records file. Notes sent to author by Dr. Walter N. Vernon, Nashville, Tennessee.

⁷⁶ Smith County, Tennessee, *Circuit Court Minutes* 1812-1836, 11191. This notation was found in the Tennessee Archives, microfilm roll No.2, 1815-1820. The Smith County Historian refused to take the author to the files to confirm that Claiborne was assessed damages of \$43.50 plus court costs from the March 24, 1818 decision.

⁷⁷ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 7.

⁷⁸ *Dawson Papers* (Washington, Arkansas, Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, unpublished paper on Trammell family), 25.

⁷⁹ Smith County, Tennessee, *Deed Book E*, (274,331-333).

⁸⁰ Smith County, Tennessee *Minute Book* 1815-1817, 61 and 75.

⁸¹ Dallas T. Herndon, *The Highlights Of Arkansas History* (Little Rock, 1922), 31. Mabbit lived near the location of Little Rock as early as 1813. As tough as he was, he still found an early death in the elements of the weather. *Arkansas Gazette*, January 8, 1820, 3:1.

"The body of Mr. William Mabbit, of Walnut Bluffs, Red River, was found Tuesday morning last, in the prairie, about 25 miles from this place [Arkansas Post]. He left here on his return home, on the 23 ult. and probably perished with the cold the ensuing night. His horse was tied near him, and had trampled upon and disfigured [sic] him in such a manner that he was only recognized by the papers in his possession."

Arkansas Gazette, January 22, 1820, 3:1, reported that he was found dead at Hickory Point. The Coroner ruled accidental death.

⁸² *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 7. MVD says "Wilman" brothers but she is confused since "Wilman" looks like Wetmore in the manuscript of George W. Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 1817, 4.

⁸³ Dan L. Flores, *Beyond The Great Raft: The Freeman And Custis Exploration Of The Red River* (unpublished manuscript), 23. The *Richmond Enquirer*, October 10, 1806, 3, for example, says:

"[it is] . . . reported 'the country above the Raft to be extremely rich,' and informed its readers that the extensive canebrakes the explorers had noticed would be no more difficult to clear than a cornfield; the prairies would require no clearing;"

These glowing accounts and the distribution of the report of the expedition spurred numerous Anglo-American trading parties to take the route up the river despite the harshness with which New Spain viewed American trading forays on the Red River. See also Julia Kathryn Garrett, "Letters And Documents, Doctor John Sibley And the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1803-1814," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XLV (July, 1941-April, 1942), 296-297. "By March, 1807, Sibley could report that groups of traders were ascending the river every few days." Dan L. Flores writes that the report was not widely published,

but had no protection. . . "³³²

Despite this drawback, George reports that in 1822, 1823, and 1824 even more immigrants came into the Valley, bidding defiance upon both the Indians and the unfair and premature actions of the Army. This did not stop the problems, however. The results of the negotiations of the Treaty of Washington in 1825 with the Choctaw still left two or three thousand residents north of the Red River in Indian Territory. The attempt to "buy back" all that land in Arkansas had failed.³³³

Arkansas's Delegate to the Congress at that time, Henry W. Conway, wrote Secretary of War James Barbour of the situation:

"In January last, a Treaty was made at this place [Washington] by the Secretary of War. . . for the purchase of about one half of the Country inhabited [by the Indians]. . . West of the line established by this Treaty [of 1825] there are between two and three thousand souls, inhabitants of the counties of Crawford and Miller, still residing on Indian lands. . . "³³⁴

Conway urged that the Treaty should not be immediately fulfilled, for the settlers were not knowledgeable of its contents and were in the process of planting crops. As the Indians were agricultural too, and were doing the same thing, Conway professed that the Treaty's provisions to remove the whites should be postponed until at least the next Fall or Winter. In fact, he suggested the Treaty be suspended until January of 1826, "to allow ample time to those unfortunate citizens who resided within the limits claimed by the Indians to make and gather the crop of the year and to prepare for removal."³³⁵

In the meantime, Claiborne had no intention of leaving his home even though his older sons, Will, Travis and George, operated most of their business across the River either in

and mostly the expedition was ignored as a part of the reason for the creation of the Neutral Ground. See his book in the Epilogue. *Jefferson & Southwestern Exploration: The Freeman & Custis Accounts of the Red River Expedition of 1806* (Norman, Oklahoma, Oklahoma University Press, 1984).

⁸⁴ For a good narrative of this expedition, read Dan L. Flores, "Rendezvous At Spanish Bluff: Jefferson's Red River Exploration," *Red River Valley Historical Review*, IV (1979).

⁸⁵ Smith County, Tennessee, *Deed Book F(1817-1819)*, 2. Claiborne sold the farm on January 19, 1816. Later on, January 9, 1817, he bought it back for \$825 (page 18), less than the \$1,200 he received from Anderson the year before. He bought it back from John Hughes. No record of its subsequent sale was located in the records. On January 16, 1817, Claiborne sold one acre, which was within the farm property originally, to Judd Strother for \$10. See page 10. It was ". . . lying and being. . . on the south side of the Cumberland River near the said Wright's ferry and a part of the tract whereon the said Wright now lives. . . " If Claiborne did live there at this time, stories of the family coming to Texas in 1816 are wrong. The filing of this transaction may have taken a year or perhaps Claiborne came back to finish the sale of his land, which apparently was tangled up in some problems.

⁸⁶ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 8, and Myrtle Murray, "Claiborne Wright-Pioneer Of The Red River District," *Progressive Farmer* (March, 1960), 31.

⁸⁷ Murray, *Progressive Farmer*, 31. "They loaded livestock-a cow and a calf-two coops for chickens, two hunting dogs, barrels of spring water and a keg of whiskey to use in case of illness."

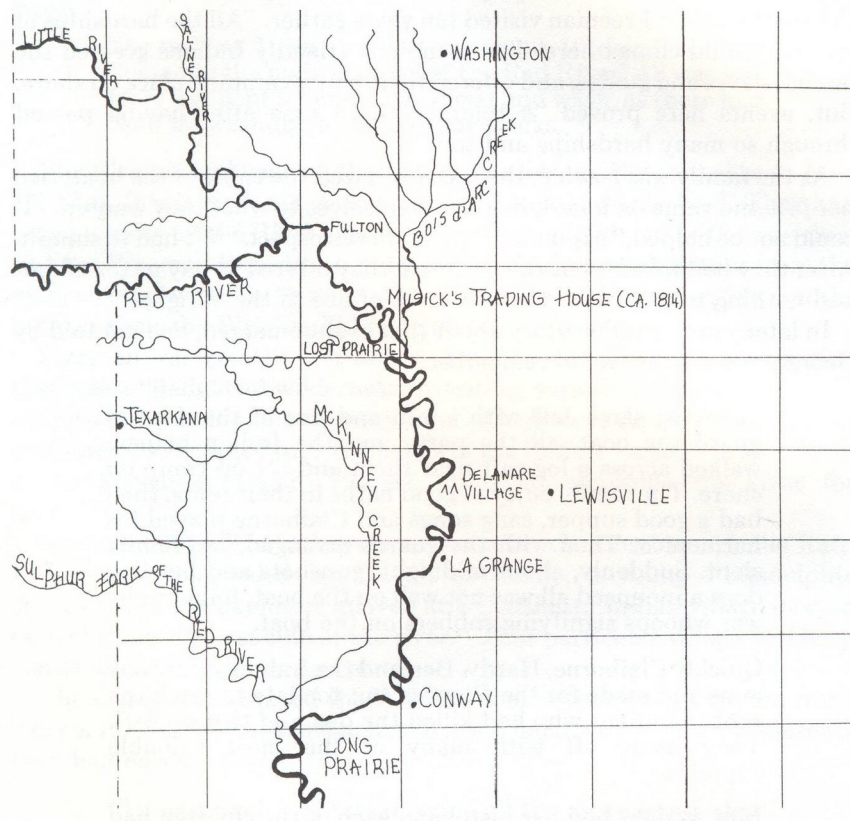
⁸⁸ "Smith County, Tennessee, *County Minute Book*, 1815-1817,98, 128."

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 183.

Jonesborough or in the surrounding countryside. In 1825, Jonesborough [more likely all Miller County] claimed a population of 2,500.³³⁶ But Court was still held at Claiborne's home, a few miles northeast. He had replaced Bailey English as sheriff of Miller County in February, 1823, and Claiborne's nephew John H. Fowler, was now the county clerk.³³⁷ Therefore, Claiborne and the inhabitants of Shawneetown, Clear Creek and Pecan Point felt relatively safe from forced removal at this particular time.

Claiborne's life was becoming more stable after suffering through the year without Betty. His old friend, Cornelius Brown, who lived nearby, had a daughter, Harriet Hannah, who was

Map Of area where Old Bob Musick's Trading Post Was Located.



⁹⁰ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book No.3, 9.

Chapter 2:

⁹¹ Rex W. Strickland, "Miller County, Arkansas Territory, The Frontier That Men Forgot," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, XVIII (March, 1940), 18. Dr. Strickland made the common mistake that *two* daughters and *five* sons were on the trip. This misconception comes from reading the typed version of George W. Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 1817 (George Wright's Memoirs), unpublished account of life in or near Pecan Point from 1817 through late 1830's, 38. A check of a copy of the original manuscript, in the *Edgar Wright Papers*, Paris, Texas, reveals that it says *a daughter*. It does say *five* sons but this must be a slip of memory by Wright (or John H. Fowler, whom some give credit for writing a portion of *Visit Through Texas*) for records have always mentioned only four sons--William, Marley, Travis and George--and one daughter--Henrietta. Alex would be born in 1820, after arriving in Texas. The written manuscript also shows that it does not say "a negro girl and a child"

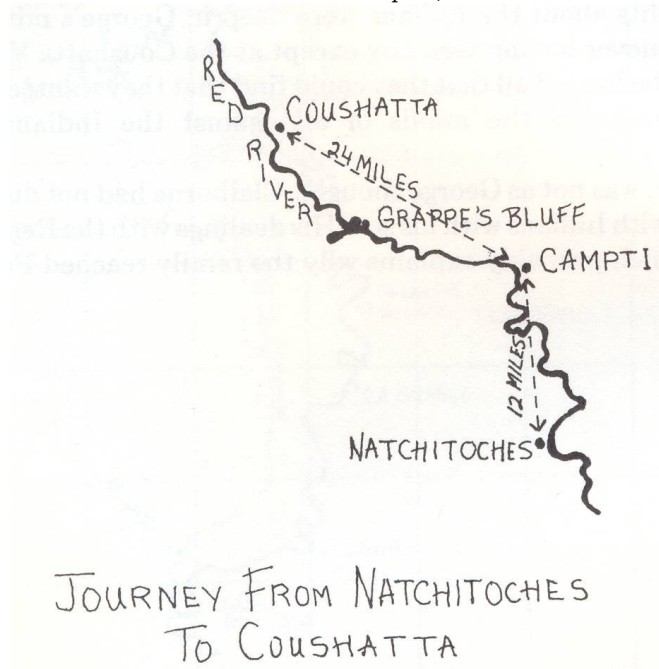
catching his eye.³³⁸ They finally married in 1823 and had their first born, John Claiborne, in 1824, joining Alex, now four, and Marley, 13, at home. George, Will and Travis usually stayed on the Texas farm or at their other various business ventures.³³⁹ Henrietta had married Martin and was expecting their first child at any moment.

Claiborne, in his mid-forties now, had watched Harriet grow into womanhood as he went about his political duties in Miller County, while trying to also farm and produce sufficient income to support his motherless family. As a whole, the father and two younger sons had been surviving well, but to get his mind off Betty's death, he dove deeper into politics. Henrietta watched after Alex those first three years, substituting for her mother in

accompanied them, but that "a negro girl *in child* [pregnant]" was also on the boat. See 2007 edited and footnoted edition of the *Visit Through Texas* or *George W. Wright Memoirs*, copy in the Lamar County Genealogy Society Library, Union Depot, Paris, Texas.

⁹² Tillson-Mary Vivian Daniel (MVD) Papers, Book 3 (Steely Papers files, most can be viewed at the Gee Library Archives, Texas A&M-Commerce [East Texas State University], Steely Collection), 8. From his reading and talking to traders, he was apparently assured that the trip would take only about 90 days.

⁹³ Campti is located 12 miles north of Natchitoches and 24 miles south of Coushatta. It is 66 miles southeast of Shreveport, Louisiana.



⁹⁴ There is no written evidence that the guide was confused, only conjecture derived from reading the description of the trip in Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 1817, 34. See Map on page 25. At times, the family must have been traveling in circles.

⁹⁵ Hubert Humphreys, "Photographic Views Of Red River Raft, 1873," *Louisiana History*, XII (1971), 102. The Raft was an ever-shifting series of logjams. Its existence was told in early Indian legends and in later French and Spanish accounts.

⁹⁶ Dan L. Flores, "Rendezvous At Spanish Bluff: Jefferson's Red River Exploration," *Red River Valley Historical Review*, IV, No.2, (1979), 13-17. Also, Julia Kathryn Garrett, "Letters And Documents: Dr. John Sibley And The Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1803-1804," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XLV,

many ways.

Harriet, a young and energetic girl from a rather strong Clear Creek Settlement family, reminded Claiborne of her mother, Jane, who was still a rather pretty lady some eight years older than her future son-in-law. It was not too odd, to early settlers, to see an older man marry a girl like Harriet, who turned 26 just after their union.³⁴⁰

Courtship for the pair was erratic, however, as Claiborne was continually busy with his new job in the political arena. He had been elected as Miller County's first politician to serve on the Legislative Council in the General Assembly, Territory of Arkansas. He was joined in Little Rock, the new capital, on

(July, 1941-April, 1942), 286-287. "Sibley arrived in Spanish Louisiana in September, 1802, and visited with men of importance. In 1803, he settled without his family at Natchitoches, Louisiana, which. . . became the furthest outpost of the United States facing Spanish dominions." See, too, G.P. Whittington, "Doctor John Sibley Of Natchitoches, 1757-1837," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XX (1927), 469. In March, 1803, he made a journey up the Red River, keeping a journal, hence Sibley was perhaps the Anglo authority on Spanish Texas before Freeman.

⁹⁷ Flores, *Red River Valley Review*, IV, No.2, 13.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15. Freeman left Natchitoches on June 2, arrived at Campti on June 7, reached the head of the Great Raft on June 11 and exited from Willow Chute back into the Red River's main channel about June 26, just 24 days but 98 miles later. They traveled in two flat-bottomed barges and a Pirogue, all of light draft. Grant Foreman, (ed.) *Adventure On The Red River* (Norman, 1937), 6.

⁹⁹ Alice Fortier, *Louisiana: Comprising Sketches Of Parishes, Towns, Events, Institutions And Persons* (New Orleans, 1914), I, 153. (quoted by Flores, *Red River Valley Review*, IV, No.2, 13).

¹⁰⁰ Dan Flores, "Travels And Adventures In The American Southwest, 1810-1812," *The John Maley Journal* (Natchitoches, 1972), unpublished master's thesis, 62.

¹⁰¹ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 1817,34, does not say how long it took from Natchitoches to reach the first raft. Freeman says it took his party nine days to hit the first logjam. However, it is feasible that the Raft began farther up the Red River in 1816 than in 1806. Freeman mentions entering Bayou Dorcheat from the main channel, Wright says they left the Red River at Coushatta. See Flores, *Red River Valley Review*, IV, No.2, 14.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, He said "the boat was weak handed, five men, one little boy about fourteen [William] and a negro woman. However, in *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book 3, page 10, it says help existed in a larger crew and from the eight hired helpers. George was born on December 1, 1809. Since he does not mention his other older brother, Travis, as being on the boat, this might be the best evidence that Travis stayed behind in Kentucky to travel to Texas later with his cousins, John H. and Wiley P. Fowler.

¹⁰⁴ Flores, *Red River Valley Review*, IV, No.2, 14. Flores says it was probably the Loggy Bayou or Bisteneau Chute. The Dorcheat flows into the northern extremity of Lake Bisteneau. The expedition was probably under the impression that the Bayou Dorcheat flowed all the way through and emptied into the Red River below the Raft. Flores says, "Freeman. . . probably followed the 'regular' detour around the Great Raft, which would have carried them through Loggy Bayou to Lake Bisteneau, then through Red Chute Bayou to Bayou Bodcau and a swamp by the same name, and finally through a small passage known as Willow Chute, which carried the party back to the river above the Raft." See also, N. Phillips Norman, "The Red River Of The South," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXI (January-October), 1942,400, and *Louisiana House Document* 98, ser. 2566, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 34. See first note on page 166 for more.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 35. This must have been what is now Lake Bistineau.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

October 1, 1821, by Neil McLane of Arkansas County; Daniel Mooney of Phillips County; Peyton Tucker of Independence County; Dr. Robert Andrews of Hempstead County; Thomas Fish of Clark County; Benjamin Murphy of Pulaski County; James Billingsley of Crawford County; and William Janes of Lawrence County. Stephen R. Wilson represented Miller County in the House of Representatives for that term.³⁴¹

Little Rock had just been chosen by the first meeting of the General Assembly as the new seat of government in the Territory, replacing the old Post of Arkansas, located at the mouth of the Arkansas River. It had been the earliest settlement in the vast

¹¹² Flores, *Red River Valley Review*, IV, No.2, 14. Freeman hired two Coushatta guides to help at Lake Bodcau and at Willow Chute.

¹¹³ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 36. While the trip through the Raft seemed to last three months, as George states, it more than likely was shorter. It took 71 days to reach Natchitoches (March 5-May 15), and then 113 days to reach Pecan Point from there. (May 16-September 5). It was a long trip, with many stops and barriers.

¹¹⁴ Tillson-MVD Papers, Book No.3, 9. Claiborne Wright's sister Clara married Godfrey Fowler. They lived, in 1816, in Kentucky but had gone to Carthage, Tennessee before Claiborne moved there. The Fowlers moved to near Princeton in 1806/1807.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* Mary Daniel's narrative is flowery, if not exaggerated at times. However, the writer must assume that she heard these descriptions at one time during her life from her mother, Emily B. Wright Daniel, and other family members.

¹¹⁷ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 36.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹¹⁹ Freeman returned to the Red River about 66 days sooner than did the Wrights. It must be pointed out that the Wright trip, according to family lore, was taken in 1816, although no direct reference is ever made to prove the dates March 5 and September 5 as departure and arrival times. Dr. Rex Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities In Northeastern Texas, 1803-1845* (Unpublished Thesis, University Of Texas, Austin, June, 1937), 73, and Dr. Walter Vernon, *William Stevenson, Riding Preacher* (Dallas, 1964), 27, both confer with these dates, however, basing their information on the family tradition that these dates and year are correct.

¹²⁰ Flores, *Red River Valley Review*, IV, No.2, 15.

¹²¹ Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword Of The Republic* (New York, 1969), 87. Congress had appropriated \$5,000 for this second expedition into the southwest, the first being led by William Dunbar and Dr. George Hunter. These two curtailed their plans because of hostility with the Osage Indians and fear of Spanish interference. Freeman and Custis were also accompanied by Captain Richard Sparks of the Second Infantry, Lieutenant Enoch Humphreys of the artillery, two noncommissioned officers, 17 privates and a negro servant. They were joined by 20 men from the Garrison at Natchitoches. They left Fort Adams on the Mississippi on April 19, 1806. At a point 635 miles above the mouth of the Red River, on July 29, the party ran into a large body of Spanish troops, led by Don Francisco Viana, and then turned back. Also, see Dan L. Flores, *Beyond The Great Raft: The Freeman And Custis Exploration Of The Red River* (Unpublished paper written while Flores was working on his doctorate at Texas A&M), 7. "The problem of securing a naturalist for the expedition remained. Again, several candidates were screened before [President] Jefferson selected Dr. Peter Custis." Also, Eron Dunbar Rowland, *Life, Letters And Papers Of William Dunbar* (Jackson, 1930), 174, and Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, XVII, (Cleveland, 1905), 66.

¹²⁸ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 37.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

western territory, but was too far from the expected population center of the potential state. Little Rock was not really a town quite yet. Adequate buildings had been promised by Amos Wheeler, a surveyor hired by James Bryan and William O'Hara, if the Assembly of 1820 would choose the area as the capital over Fulton and Cadron.³⁴² By meeting time in the Fall of 1821, few places of boarding were actually open for business.

Therefore, Dr. Matthew Cunningham, who in 1820 was first to settle a family at Little Rock, and his wife, Eliza, decided to open their home for boarders to use during the session.³⁴³ And, after all, medical business for the doctor was not too good, considering there were not many people in Little Rock to care for

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

Chapter 3:

¹³³ H.S. Halbert and T.H. Ball, *The Creek War Of 1813 And 1814* (Tuscaloosa, 1969), 279. The "Treaty of Conquest" was concluded on August 9, 1814. A large domain west of the Coosa River was ceded to the United States by the Indians to help pay the cost of the war. A part of the Creeks refused to honor the treaty at Toulouse and remained at war, aided and abetted by the Spaniards. Jackson finally took Pensacola, thus closing the war.

¹³⁴ *Tillson-Mary Vivian Daniel (MVD) Papers*, Book No.3 (*Steely Papers* files, Commerce, Texas), 7. Wright family historian until 1960, Mary Daniel says Claiborne Wright participated under the command of General Flournoy in deporting Chief Weatherford from the Alabama River in 1813. Thus, the assumption that Wright participated in the Holy Ground campaign. There are no more family notes to verify exactly his duties, however.

¹³⁵ See more on Pitchlynn in Chapter V. Also, see *Steely Papers, Paris, Texas, Personal Files*, folders on Calvin Howell, John and Ashley Wright, and Pitchlynn family.

¹³⁶ Halbert and Ball, *The Creek War*, 215. Also, G.H. Bayles, "Tecumseh and the Bayles Family Tradition," *Register Of The Kentucky Historical Society*, XL VI, No. 157 (October, 1948), 648. Bayles says, "an extraordinary character was living called the *Prophet*. There are many stories extant as to Tecumseh's relationship to the *Prophet*. Colonel William Hatch quotes Simon Kenton as saying Tecumseh, the 'Prophet' and another Indian were triplets. Later Hatch says Tecumseh and the *Prophet* were twins. . . knowing the fixed belief of the Indians in the supernatural powers of twins and much more when triplets. It is possible that these men. . . made no effort to deny them [the stories]."

¹³⁷ Halbert and Ball, *The Creek War*, 145. As many as 1,500 Indians attacked some 550 inhabitants of Fort Mims, located several miles from the site of Fort Stoddart.

¹³⁸ Claiborne, *Mississippi As A Province*, 330. The letter was dated December 18, 1813. It is an assumption that Wright was a courier who delivered the letter to his cousin, General Claiborne, but it does make sense, according to evidence, that it was at this point Wright would have had his chance to participate in the fight with Weatherford. No other dates find him available to be away from Smith County, Tennessee. See Smith County, Tennessee, *County Court Minute Book*, 1813-1815, 49, 73, 71, 121, 191 and 213. These entries prove Claiborne was in Smith County from December 28, 1813 through at least August 10, 1814, serving on juries, trading land, witnessing documents or being sued. (*Steely Papers*, Kentucky-Tennessee-Illinois-Indiana Research file, Appendix, 104).

¹³⁹ Halbert and Ball, *The Creek War*, 270.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Claiborne, *Mississippi As A Province*, 318. Mr. Claiborne says "Ecanauachaha" prophets assured the Indians that the earth would swallow up

in its early years!

Dr. Cunningham was also in the midst of the controversy brewing over land ownership of Little Rock, a complicated battle with William Russell. Russell claimed the pre-emption certificate he had obtained from former New Madrid residents for \$40 covered most of the new city. Stephen F. Austin, along with the Secretary of the Territory Robert Crittenden, *Arkansas Gazette* owner William E. Woodruff, and a man named Chester Ashley, would all attempt to gain an easy fortune by owning the land on which the new capital would grow.³⁴⁴

In the Fall of 1821, even though he had not yet been able to move the *Gazette* from Arkansas Post to Little Rock, Woodruff was

General Claiborne and his troops. They based their beliefs upon the events caused by Tecumseh (so they thought) who had knowledge given him of the comet of 1811 and used it to his advantage. When the earth trembled under the New Madrid Earthquake of 1811 and 1812, too, the Creeks began to believe Tecumseh had supernatural powers and many took arms at his request. This belief carried on with the Creek prophets, who thought they too might cause unnatural things, giving confidence to the Indians.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 329.

¹⁴⁴ Haibert and Ball, *The Creek War*, 270.

¹⁴⁵ Assumption only. This would be one of the few opportunities for Wright to join with General Claiborne and fight against Weatherford.

¹⁴⁶ Haibert and Ball, *The Creek War*, 131. Burnt Corn is located in the middle of present-day Monroe County.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁵⁰ Claiborne, *Mississippi As A Province*, 326. Actually, Tennessee pledged its revenues for the next 100 years to pay for whatever the expense would be.

¹⁵¹ John Reid and John Henry Eaton, *Life Of General Jackson* (Tuscaloosa, 1974), 59. The Indians considered Jackson the main leader of the white forces from Tennessee. See Halbert and Ball, *The Creek War*, 271-272 for best example pertaining to the Hillabee Massacre.

¹⁵² Haibert and Ball, *The Creek War*, 246.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁵⁴ Assumption.

¹⁵⁵ Halbert and Ball, *The Creek War*, 253-54.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 258

¹⁵⁷ Claiborne, *Mississippi As A Province*, 330. Here might be a good point to briefly summarize the life of General F.L. Claiborne. The General was born in 1773 in Sussex County, Virginia. He and Claiborne Wright were first cousins (see chart). Wright was eight years younger, however. The pair had probably either never met before the Creek War or had perhaps crossed paths at Natchez in 1811 when Wright sailed with the *New Orleans*. They may have met in Nashville, since Dr. Thomas Claiborne, the General's brother, lived there. General Claiborne, in 1793, was appointed ensign in the Legion of the service of the United States and placed under the command of Major-General Anthony Wayne on the Northwestern Frontier.

He later was stationed at Richmond and Norfolk and subsequently at Pittsburgh, Fort Washington, Fort Greenville and Detroit, where he remained as Captain and acting adjutant general, 1st Regiment of the U.S. Infantry, Army of the West, until 1805. He resigned then and moved to Natchez to enter into the mercantile and agricultural business. He was elected as a representative to the Mississippi Territorial Legislature, chosen by that body to preside over its deliberations. His brother, Nathaniel Herbert, served 20 years as a member of Congress from Virginia and his brother William Charles Cole

on his way to the second session of the Assembly to cover its proceedings. At the same time, Ashley, returning from Missouri with Mary Watkins Worthington Elliott, his bride of three months, came through the Post and traveled with Woodruff.³⁴⁵

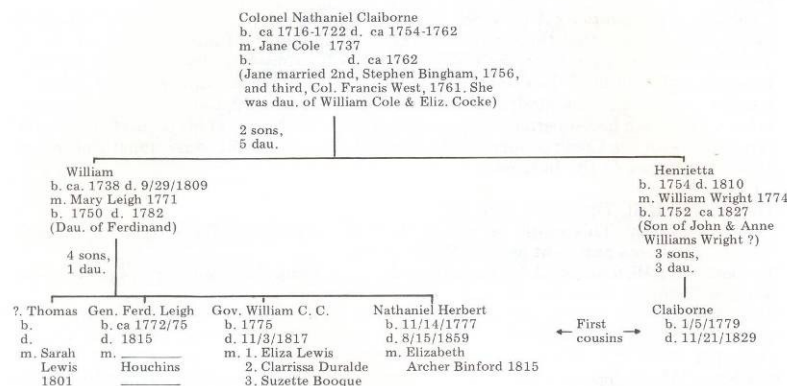
Ashley had come to Arkansas shortly after the *Gazette* began publication on November 20, 1818, arriving with another lawyer, James H. Lucas.³⁴⁶ Lucas was destined to be a printer for the *Gazette* for a brief time before inheriting a vast fortune in St. Louis.³⁴⁷ Ashley turned his attentions from law to land speculation, thus the reason for his move to Little Rock.

The two friends, Ashley and Woodruff, were headed for the same destination as Claiborne Wright--Dr. Cunningham's boarding

was Governor of Mississippi Territory and the Territory of Orleans from 1801-1816.

Hostile demonstrations by the Spaniards brought the soldierly life back to Claiborne under General Wilkinson. On March 8, 1813, F.L. Claiborne was named Brigadier General and placed with the command of Baton Rouge. Later, in June, he was ordered to Fort Stoddart on the Alabama. See also, Dunbar Rowland, *Official Letter Books Of W.C.C. Claiborne, 1801-1816* (Jackson, 1917), I, 1-4.

Claiborne Family Chart Showing Possible Relationship With Claiborne Wright. See *Steely Papers*, Genealogical Charts, Claiborne Family Line.



No Descendent of Claiborne Wright has Discovered His Connection with the Virginia Claibornes

Henrietta Claiborne Wright married William in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, died in Surry County, North Carolina. William was born in Fauquier County, Virginia, died in either Louisville, Kentucky, or Shippingsport, Indiana, directly across from Louisville. The connection between Henrietta and her father, Nathaniel, is flimsy, based upon evidence uncovered by Mary Vivian Daniel in the 1940's, Henrietta went to-live with her Aunt Anne, who married Christopher Holmes Freeman, after her parents died. Here is a possible 2007 internet website to study the Claiborne relationship and the families that may have been from Claiborne Wright siblings: <http://mypeoplepc.com/members/joe88240/WRIGHTS/>. It does not work in 2011.

¹⁵⁸ See footnote 7 for Court Records proving Wright was back in Smith County in January.

¹⁵⁹ Reid and Eaton, *Life Of General Jackson*, 157.

Chapter 4:

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, The term, musk, was usually used in reference to the substance secreted by the male musk deer, used in perfumery. Obviously, George Wright didn't think the alligator musk was too inviting!

house.³⁴⁸ While Wright probably spent only a short time in the quarters, he became very good friends with Ashley during that period, and, in honor of the association, later named his second son by Harriet after Ashley. By the time of his death, Chester Ashley had become the wealthiest man in the State of Arkansas. He died in 1848, while serving as a Senator in Washington, D.C.³⁴⁹ Wright was not the only father so impressed by Ashley that he named his son for him. Dr. Cunningham and his wife had previously done the same in 1822.

Business was the agenda for the next month, and any pleasure would have to wait as the group of men gathered in Little Rock to legislate laws. On October 10, 1821, Claiborne Wright

¹⁶³ Spain's troubles in the homeland, and with the revolutionary attitude in Mexico, kept them from guarding their interests in the Province of Texas. Note: Texas was not to become a State until January 31, 1824 when the Act of Confederation was passed by the Mexican Congress, creating the one State of Coahuila and Texas. It was provided Texas could be made a separate State as it "possessed the necessary elements." Louis J. Wortham, *A History of Texas*, I (Fort Worth, 1924), 149.

¹⁶⁴ George Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 38.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* The Captain mentioned might have been Captain Charles Burkham who came to Texas in 1816.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 39. That's what he says, "coffee." It is assumed George Wright means the coffee was obtained through trade of bearskin, or perhaps a blend of substance obtained from a bear provided a drink he called "coffee."

¹⁶⁷ A.W. Neville, *The History of Lamar County* (Paris, 1937), 11.

¹⁶⁸ *Footprints*, newsletter of the Fort Worth Genealogical Society (XVII, No.2, May, 1974), 60. Dr. Rex Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities in Northeastern Texas, 1803-1845* (unpublished Thesis, University of Texas, June, 1937), 68.

¹⁶⁹ Neville, *History of Lamar County*, 11. After the Battle of New Orleans, in January, 1815, John Emberson, Allen Carter and five other white men wintered in what is now Lamar County, trapping and hunting before returning home (Tennessee and Virginia) through Arkansas. Carter was supposedly part Cherokee Indian. Emberson later married Matilda, his sister, and moved back to the area, and is now commonly known as Lamar County's first white settler. Mary Ruth Biard, *Sketch of Emberson Family*, (Steely Files), 1. "Allen Carter, my grandfather (of Clide Carter, deceased) started to Texas in 1810, and stopped in a little place called Cincinnati, Arkansas. Allen served as a scout for Andrew Jackson in the battle of New Orleans and met up with John Emberson. John came up Red River and looked this country over for about six months; that is, John Emberson came home with Allen Carter, and married his sister, Matilda." Rita (Kennedy) Sutton, *The Descendents of Charles and Lucy Carter*, II (From *Early Carters In Scott County, Virginia*, 1981), 72 & 74. These and several others, such as the Wetmores and Mabbitt, were here probably before Lawrence, but were not permanently attached to a piece of land as was Lawrence.

¹⁷⁰ Neville, *History of Lamar County*, 11. *George Travis Wright Papers*, lone Lewis Copies, 34. Originally this land claimed by Lawrence was called "Mound Prairie" Improvement. Genealogy of this land is proven in a Bill of Sale, April 5, 1830, when J.J. Ward sold his title to B. Sam Worthington (the late Willie Devlin of Minter Community was a Worthington kin). Where the Wrights had a farm prior to that date is unknown.

¹⁷¹ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 68. Mound Prairie is also the name given to land near Washington, Arkansas, where the Rev. William Stevenson (discussed later) lived. Rex W. Strickland, "Miller County, Arkansas Territory, The Frontier That Men Forgot," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XVIII, No.1, (March, 1940), 18, or Dr. Walter N. Vernon, *William Stevenson, Riding Preacher* (Dallas, 1964), 8. Adam Lawrence later sold his land to Jesse Shelton in 1818.

¹⁷² *Arkansas Gazette* (Little Rock), May 23, 1826, 3:1.

¹⁷³ Strickland, *Chronicles*, XVIII, No.1, 14. *Arkansas Gazette*, February 18, 1820, 3:1. There is no mention of Robinson in this version, signed A MEMBER. Dr. Strickland says the author was William Stevenson.

began his first lesson in "big-time" politics. He was now standing next to men who would be well-known to future historians and citizens of Arkansas. His efforts would generally be ignored by those who later wrote of the events. Claiborne was not new, however, to the ways of political life. This does not mean he was ambitious enough to work for higher office. However, at first it seemed he was.

Claiborne had dabbled in public service previous to his selection on the Legislative Council, setting a foundation for a strong future as a lawmaker. He was elected, along with W.D. Craig, Joab Scullian and Thomas Dooley, as one of the first four

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁷⁶ *Arkansas Gazette*, February 18, 1820, 3:2.

¹⁷⁷ Research since writing this book and creating this map places Walter Poole on the Red River in 1815; Thomas Denton and John Denton, his father, there sometime in 1817 or early 1818; Thomas Denton living near Wright in 1820/21; and Wright living at Pecan Point in 1822. See H.K. Brown letter in *Steely Collection*, Mary Kegley File, Gee Archives. This map is only a rough guess at where the settlers lived.

¹⁸¹ Walter Prescott Webb, H. Bailey Carroll and Eldon Stephen Branda (eds.), *The Handbook of Texas*, I (Austin, 1952, 1976), 924. Jones was born in Richmond, Virginia, on March 16, 1789. He and his brother (W.M. Jones ?) sought adventure in the West, joining with Martin Varner to hunt and trap in Missouri Territory in 1817. The trio drifted southwest to create Jonesborough. In 1821, Jones married Nancy, daughter of William Stiles. They had 12 children. In the same year, they joined Stephen F. Austin's original 298 families, receiving title to land in Fort Bend County, eight miles below present Richmond, Texas. It was a frequent stopping place for William B. Travis. In 1860, Jones' property was valued at \$200,000. He died June 8, 1861.

¹⁸² George Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 39.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 40. George Wright lived a relatively civilized life in comparison. He participated in many of the decisions and events that are today a part of Texas history. He served as a courier after San Jacinto, served in the Republic of Texas Congress, twice as a representative and once as a senator, and helped write the first constitution of the State of Texas. Wright also, in 1861, was one of only eight men to vote against Secession, a very unpopular stand to take, but one he firmly believed in. He went on, however, to be the Provost Marshall for Lamar County during the War Between the States. He died in 1877, just a few days before Paris, the town he founded, burned, the first of two disastrous fires the city would suffer. Wright was politically active up until two years before his death, serving as a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in St. Louis.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁸⁸ Strickland, *Chronicles*, XVIII, No.1, 21. Dr. Strickland says that Claiborne's "eldest" son, Travis, accompanied the pair. Travis was not the eldest, William Fowler Wright was. However, there is a possibility that Claiborne returned to Tennessee during the first year after settling in Texas to finish business there. Court records verify that he was in Carthage in 1817. Possibly he had taken Travis (or William) with him on that trip and returned to Texas before the trio. Quinsy is tonsillitis. Godfrey Fowler fought all the perils of the wilderness of Tennessee and Kentucky, only to fall to a disease that is simply corrected in modern times. He had been instrumental in influencing Claiborne Wright to settle near Carthage, Tennessee. In fact, according to family lore, Godfrey arrived in Smith County, Tennessee, (which was Sumner County at that time) in 1798, and later not only Claiborne followed his brother-in-law but also another sister, Sara, and her husband, W.M. Morphis, arrived to live there.

Hempstead County magistrates. This was on August 3, 1819.³⁵⁰ He served in that county until the formation of Miller County's own justice system, two years later. He even did double duty as a magistrate for one day, August 30, 1820, serving in Miller County, too.³⁵¹ His last duties for Hempstead County came in the March term, 1821.³⁵²

Keeping alive his political fires, Claiborne even allowed himself to be elected as the Miller County coroner almost immediately upon return from Little Rock to Red River. He replaced the resigned Joshua Ewing, who served from August 27 until December 15, 1821. Claiborne kept that post until resigning

Tillson-Mary Vivian Daniel (MVD) Papers, Book 1 (Steely files), Section 12, 26. The Fowlers left that area in 1806 or 1807 to move to Caldwell County, Kentucky and make their home near what is now Princeton.

¹⁹² There is much confusion over just how long Wiley Paul stayed in what was to become Miller County, Arkansas. His signature is on a petition in January 1821, from the citizens of Arkansas to the President soliciting attention to the possible problems ratification of the Treaty of Doak's Stand would pose to settlers on the western front. See *Territorial Papers of the United States, Territory of Arkansas*, XIX, 388, and the *Arkansas Gazette*, January 20, 1821, 3:2. Various publications found while researching near Princeton, Kentucky comment that W.P. Fowler returned to his home when Texas was ceded to Spanish dominion in 1819.

Fowler was admitted to practice law in the Fall of 1823, locating in the district west of the Tennessee River. Rev. Silas G. Emmett (ed.), *Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky*, (Cincinnati, 1878), 567, and H. Leven (ed.), *Lawyers and Lawmakers of Kentucky* (Chicago: 1885), 408. Both of these references say about the same thing. Judy Magee, in *Echoes of Yesteryear* (Smithland: 1972), 67, notes that after sampling Texas life "he then tried his hand at farming in Arkansas, another wilderness. Tiring of this life after a few years, he returned to Kentucky and located first at Columbus. . ."

There is a more recent piece on W.P. Fowler by Cunningham, *Flames In The Wind*, 15. Cunningham says Fowler returned in two years. Unless someone signed for him on the petition, however, it is clear that the future judge did not return to Kentucky until at least 1821. Also, Cunningham, like Magee, notes that Fowler backtracks to farm in Arkansas. It is possible that the originator of this story did not know that portion of Texas near Pecan Point was also claimed by the Territory of Arkansas. But, it is possible that W.P. moved to more population in Hempstead County, to farm and associate.

One last note on Fowler. There is confusion over the pronunciation of "Wiley." Those in Kentucky pronounce it Wiley, like in Wiley Post or Wylie, Texas. But, in a document filed on August 1, 1822, his mother writes his name, "Wilie," as if it is pronounced as the nickname to William. See Caldwell County Bill of Sale, (*Steely Papers*, Lynn Cravens file). One author names him William (Wiley) Paul but a few pages later he names him Judge "Wiley" Pitt Fowler! Grover Parsons Fowler, *The House of Fowler* (Hickory, North Carolina: 1940), 558 & 566.

¹⁹³ *Littleton Fowler Papers*, (unpublished, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Bridwell Library), *Steely Papers*, 16. Letter from W.P. Fowler to Littleton Fowler, February 7, 1840, says that Joseph had left home in 1840 with the intention to visit the brothers in Texas (all were there then except W.P. and Joseph) after he visited his Mississippi plantation. Brother-in-law Thomas B. Wilson (married sister Polly) was at that time already in Texas. See letter from W.P. Fowler to Littleton Fowler, December 20, 1840, *Steely Papers*, 17. Joseph apparently never made it as far as Pecan Point. He had tried a year earlier to reach the Wrights and Fowlers' home but plans changed. See letter B.C. Fowler to Littleton Fowler, January 1, 1839, *Steely Papers*, 16. Joseph died rather young in 1844. The mother, Clara, remarried in the early 1820's to a man the family did not approve of, apparently, thus promoting no real close ties to prompt a return to Kentucky to visit. *Arthur, Annals*, 63.

¹⁹⁴ *Arthur, Annals*, 168. Bradford C. Fowler came to Texas in 1830, Littleton and Jackson in 1837. No record of Jerry is available except that he was killed when attacked by a bear near Jonesborough. One account says that it is possible Jerry came with Wiley P. and John H. Fowler, Fowler, *The House of*

on September 6, 1823, to let Thomas Polk assume that unpleasant position.³⁵³

But back to Little Rock. Probably the most important act in the second Assembly during the 21 days of meetings in 1821 was the establishment of the circuit courts.³⁵⁴ The meetings in the newly constructed two-room log cabin produced decisions on such matters, in addition to the aforementioned courts, as: suppressing the purchase of horses from Indians; preventing disorderly persons from disturbing religious congregations; defining the powers of the justices; repealing a law requiring two years residency in the Territory before being able to practice law; and

Fowler, 580. Or, the widow of Jack Fowler later said she thought Jerry came in the 1820's. He had caught some cubs for sport in a field, but the mother bear attacked him so fiercely that he had to fight for his life. "The struggle was long and violent, he being unarmed except for a knife, and, although he was rescued from instant death, he never recovered from the injuries received," she related. *Ibid.* This must have been pre-1830 for no letters in the *Littleton Fowler Papers* at SMU mention Jerry (or Jeremiah). The sister Polly Ann remained in Kentucky, marrying Thomas B. Wilson. *Arthur, Annals*, 158.

¹⁹⁵ Homer S. Thrall, *History of Methodism* (Nashville: 1894), 20. Quoted in Vernon, *Riding Preacher*, 39.

¹⁹⁶ *Tillson-Mary Vivian Daniel (MVD) Papers*, Book 1, Section 12, 17. These unpublished papers say the Travis family lived in South Carolina. Although it is an assumption Claiborne met Stevenson at a camp meeting, it could be true, based upon the evidence.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11, 17 & 27. This information came from a narrative by Miss Daniel with no references included. It is possible that she learned many of these events from family stories. However, it is more feasible that she paid genealogists in Virginia and North Carolina and, along with some personal research, created her story from that evidence.

¹⁹⁸ Vernon, *Riding Preacher*, 23.

¹⁹⁹ *Tillson-MVD Papers*, Book 1, Section 12, 17. There is no evidence that Claiborne went with Stevenson, but MVD writes that the pair met while Claiborne was visiting some Baptist friends in South Carolina, early in 1802.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 17 and later, 16. Page numbers are not in order in these notes.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 16. Also, reference to the Siloam Church is found in Leah Townsend's, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805* (Florence, South Carolina: 1935), 209 & 210. There is confusion, though, if this is the correct Claiborne and Elizabeth Wright. Chester County, S.C., *Minutes Of The County Court*, relate a Claiborne Wright in a Deed of Conveyance in 1788 and another in 1791. See *Order Book B*, July 1788, 85, and at the end of the *Book B* (no numbers), when Claiborne posts a bay mare on May 3, 1791. There is some evidence the William Wright family may have lived in Chester County in the late 1790's and early 1800's. A William Wright was mentioned as a messenger in 1795 in the Providence Church, Chester County (could have been Claiborne's brother). *South Carolina Baptists*, 224. It is highly possible that this Claiborne and Elizabeth are not the couple who came to the Red River. See more research online at this website in 2007:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~markfreeman/wright.html>.

²⁰² Vernon, *Riding Preacher*, 3.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 8 & 18. Stevenson moved from Chester County at the age of 24 (1792) to Greene County, Tennessee. He stayed there six years, moved to his wife's parent's home in Virginia for several months, moved to Lexington, Kentucky for a year (1798) and then to Shelby County, Kentucky. From 1800-1809 he lived in Smith County, Tennessee 6-8 miles north of Hartsville, now located in Trousdale County.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

allowing compensation to members and officers of the General Assembly.³⁵⁵ More than likely the pay, which was not listed, would not cover Claiborne's expenses for traveling the 340 miles round trip, which took in excess of two weeks to and from Miller County.

The legislation eliminating superior court districts by providing for three terms yearly of the court, to be held in the capital, and the decision to allow the governor to borrow \$10,000 were not so important to Claiborne as a Memorial asking Congress to purchase the Quapaw Reservation.³⁵⁶ Also, a request that Crawford, Miller and Hempstead Counties each be granted pre-emption right to 160 acres of public land to be used for erecting a

²⁰⁷ Smith County, Tennessee *Deed Book B*, 45. (*Steely Papers*, Kentucky-Tennessee-Illinois and Indiana Research file, 95).

²⁰⁸ Vernon, *Riding Preacher*, 32. No evidence is found that John Travis was a relative of Elizabeth Travis Wright, but events would strongly suggest such a possibility.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38. In Walter N. Vernon, "Beginnings of Methodism in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XXXI, 363, Stevenson says "Bros. Reed and Johnson were great helpers while they remained with me; but they were looking at the country and stayed only a few weeks."

²¹² Vernon, *Riding Preacher*, 39. There is much discussion about the year he arrived in the Valley. Macum Phelan, *A History of Early Methodism*, 1817-1866, I, (Nashville: 1924), 12-15, says 1816, Graham says 1817 and Vernon 1815. It is possible that Stevenson made the trip before Wright arrived.

²¹³ Strickland, *Chronicles*, XVIII, No.1, 16-17. Dr. Strickland says Stevenson came to Pecan Point in the autumn of 1816. Vernon, *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XXXI, 357, says Stevenson moved to Mound Prairie in late 1816 or early in 1817. He called his place, "Greenfields." Vernon, *Riding Preacher*, 8.

²¹⁴ Vernon, *Riding Preacher*, 43.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60. Fowler came from a Methodist background in Kentucky (*Ibid.*, 43) but was credited originally by Dr. Vernon as being even closer to Stevenson by virtue of marrying his daughter, Betsey Stevenson. This is disproved, however, by records belonging to the Denton family in Paris, Texas, and by articles in the *Arkansas Gazette*, December 13, 1825, 3:2, and on April 11, 1826, 3:4. These verify John Hopkins Fowler's marriage to Betsey Woodson Barnett Denton, widow of Thomas Denton of Kentucky, and formerly of Miller County, Arkansas. She was the mother of John Denton and Eli Barnett and possibly a third child. She had no children by Fowler. More recent information, however, says Fowler married three women by the name of Elizabeth. See *Steely Files*, personal, John H. Fowler.

²¹⁶ Lonnie J. White, *Politics On The Southwestern Frontier, Arkansas Territory, 1819-1836* (Memphis: 1964), 23. In the election of November 20, 1819, Stevenson was the first of the three to be chosen to serve in the General Assembly, being picked by the electorate to be the Hempstead County member of the House of Representatives. In Vernon, *Riding Preacher*, 43, it says that the preacher was elected speaker of the House, meeting at Arkansas Post, then the capital of the Territory. He, however, resigned the next day "on account of indisposition," Stevenson continued to be quite active as a member, says Vernon. He was chairman of the committee that recommended the motion in the House to select Little Rock as the permanent capital.

(The reference to so much of the work of Dr. Vernon in the previous few paragraphs is not deniable. However, Dr. Vernon has long researched the settlers of the Red River Valley and understood the relationship between the Wrights, Fowlers and Stevenson. His use of Stevenson's "autobiography" as printed in the *New Orleans Christian Advocate* was most enlightening. These are moments in life of the settlers that could not be ignored)

courthouse and jail was a significant step for Wright and his constituents.³⁵⁷

However, the jail and courthouse would never materialize, as the Indian problem grew and the United States began to force more and more Indians into the designated Indian Territory. In fact, the purchase of the Quapaw tribal lands on the outskirts of Little Rock would just cause more problems for Miller County. That almost extinct tribe would eventually begin to wander through the northeastern part of Texas and northwestern Louisiana, and Oklahoma, searching for a new home.³⁵⁸

²¹⁷ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 76. Robbins was accompanied by the John Humphreys family and others.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* This found in Nuttall's papers, claims Strickland. He pinpointed the most severe year of drought as 1818.

²¹⁹ George Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 4. George only mentions Pool and Burkham, but the first three pages are apparently missing from the manuscript. Strickland must have found evidence of Bateman and Wiley, for he mentions they were also there in 1818. Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 77.

²²⁰ From this point until footnote 63, the idea for the Christmas theme of 1818 was derived from an article the late Bill Thompson wrote while editor of the *Paris News*. The exact date is not known. A copy was found in the *Edna Steely Papers*, entitled: "The Red River Valley-XXX-Old Santa Found the Valley's Youngsters, Even In The Winter of 1818!" Thompson was an excellent writer, but must have mixed some other thoughts than his own imagination into what he wrote. Minor points of error have been corrected and the story used to point out that Elizabeth (Betty) Wright would be seeing her last healthy Christmas with the family. There has been also some question of Christmas tree and gift traditions as early as 1818. Research has not confirmed, nor denied the possibility that this story could have happened!

²²¹ Bill Thompson was killed in a car wreck near Honey Grove, Texas in 1979 while returning to Paris for a visit. He was a public relations employee of Texas Power and Light Company in Dallas at the time. He loved the history of the Valley and wrote of it many times.

²²² Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 77. Strickland says George mentions these names in his *Memoirs* but they are not in any notes owned by the descendants. Neville, *History of Lamar County*, does not mention them either. However, this does not mean they were not in the area then. In fact, in one of the three 1941-42 articles Strickland wrote for *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XVIII, No.1, (March, 1940), 15, he goes into more depth on several of these early hunters. For example, Martin Varner, born in Luray, Page County, Virginia, in 1787, arrived on the Red River with Henry Jones, for whom Jonesborough was named, in about January of 1815. They had been hunting on the White River. Gabriel Martin accompanied this group also. Varner is the most documented of the group mentioned here. Varner married Elizabeth, the daughter of Joseph English, in 1818. Joseph and William English were brothers who apparently moved into the Clear Creek Settlement near the Wrights about 1817-1818. Varner and Jones set out for Stephen F. Austin's Colony in the winter of 1821-22 and lived near present-day Independence.

Varner moved over to West Columbia when he received a league and labor of land there. In 1829 he established the first rum distillery in Texas! In 1834, he sold this property for \$13,000. After placing his family in Arkansas (as did George Wright and many others), Varner, along with a group from the Pecan Point-Jones borough area, joined Sam Houston at San Jacinto. Varner was helpful in guarding the baggage and caring for the sick during the fight with the Mexican Army. He returned after his discharge, gathered his family and settled near Fort Lyday on the present-day Lamar-Fannin County line. But in 1841, he moved again, to a land grant east of Lake Fork Creek, in Wood County, becoming the first settler of that then unestablished entity. A clash with a Mexican, Simon Gonzales, who owned land nearby, ended Varner's life on Valentine's Day, 1844. He is buried in the Red Community, on a hilltop

Politics took a fourteen-month back seat for Claiborne Wright until February 19, 1823. He was then elected to replace Bailey English and found duties as sheriff of Miller County most challenging.³⁵⁹ Besides the normal problems of law enforcement and tax collections, Comanchies and Pawnees kept the entire Valley upset. George Wright wrote:

" . . . [this] threw all into confusion again for they killed and robbed a great many families. . . "³⁶⁰

facing the site of his home. Adelle W. Vickery, *Transcript of Centennial Edition, Wood County Democrat* (Mineola, 1974), 41. See the new manuscript, or sequel to this book, Steely, *Forty Seven Years*, for more detail.

²²³ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 78.

²²⁴ According to interview with Dr. Walter Vernon.

²²⁵ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 79.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 80. "Nanatscho" was the site of an ancient Caddo Indian Village.

²²⁸ *Ibid.* This movement of the "squatter" to the north side would prove ironic, for later, in the 1820's, settlers would be driven south because the Indian Territory was to be north of the Red River. The ones who moved back were probably: Wright, Charles Burkham, Walter Pool, David Clapp and Samuel Morin. Jonathon, Wyatt and Joshua Anderson. William Scrutchfield and James Thompson probably stayed north and settled at the mouth of Clear Creek. George and Alex Wetmore, and William Mabbit were the traders. Strickland, *Chronicles*, XVIII, No.1, 28. He assumes by dates of arrival and proven land records of each family.

²²⁹ This is entirely assumption. Family stories and notes mention nothing of Wright moving over the River at this time because of Jamison's effort.

²³⁰ *Mary Eliza (Aunt Pig) Wright Jennings Paper* (Steely Papers), 1. Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 78. Levins' daughter, Mary Ann, married George Wetmore. Strickland, *Chronicles*, XVIII, No.1, 25. Humphreys came with the Robbins family. He died before 1821.

²³¹ *George Travis Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies, 2. The "others" included W.M. Jones, possibly the brother of Henry, and definitely the brother-in-law of Gabriel Martin. "W.M. Jones. . . settled on the south side of the Red River in 1819 and took up some land near where Davenport [Community] is now located. In 1819, Judge Gabriel Martin, a brother-in-law to Mr. Jones, settled there also. In the Fall of 1819, Claiborne Wright bought some land nearby and built his third home in the Red River District."

²³² Speculation. There are many stories of the origin of Old Shaw!Jeetown.

²³³ ? Family notes on the various moves are confusing. *Mary Eliza Wright Jennings Papers*, 2. "He [Claiborne] then built another home and opened a farm with the above stock and seed he had acquired from Mr. Robbins. The new settlement that grew up in this neighborhood was then called Jonesboro [Jonesborough]."

George Travis Wright Papers, Ione Lewis Copies, 2. "Mr. Wright built his first log house near this trading post [Wetmores'] in October, 1816. A year later he sold this place and moved a few miles west, up the river, on higher and better ground, in 1817. He lived there two years, then, in November 1819, he bought another place at the Jonesborough settlement, and lived there until he died in 1830 [1829]." Unsigned sketch.

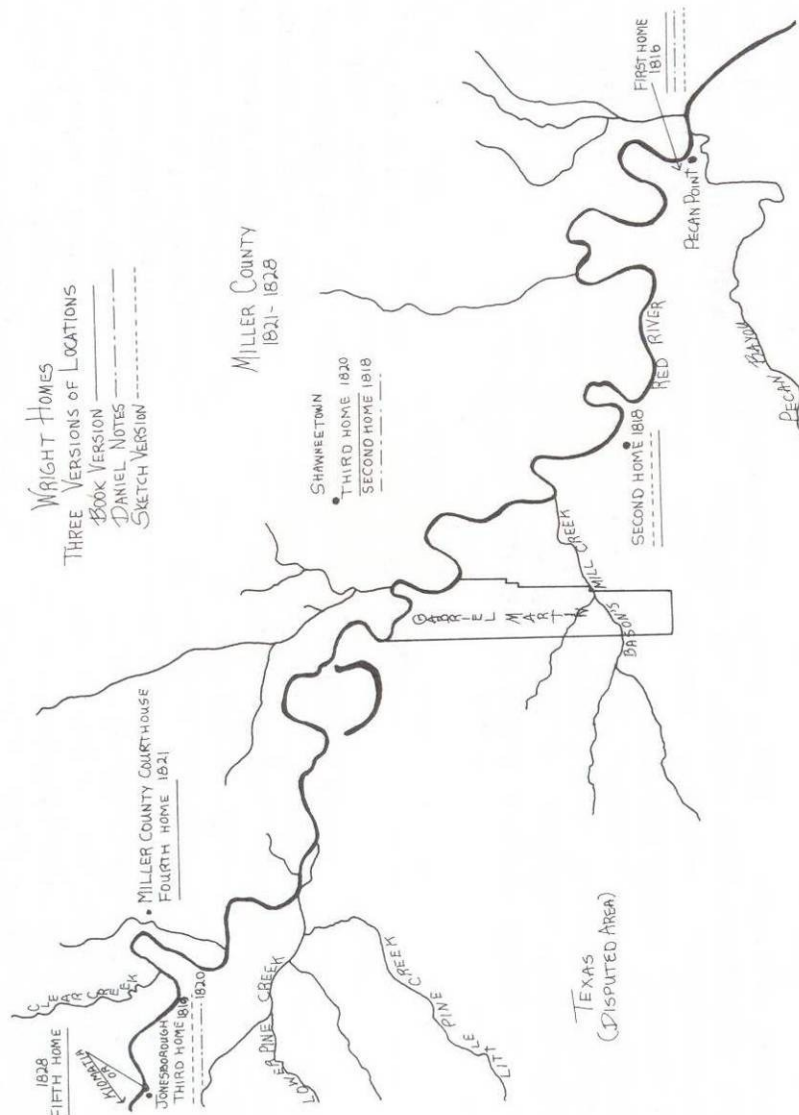
Tillson-MVD Papers, Book 2, 9. ". . . lived in Pecan Point District 'til 1818; in Shawneetown, north side of Red River 'till 1820, where his [George's] mother died; then the family moved to the south side of the Red River where they had a farm at Jonesboro."

Most likely, since Mary Daniel did so much research into the matter, this is the true movement of the Wright family, but only to a point. If Claiborne

Despite the large number of white people living on the west end of Miller County around the mid-1820's, many were still being intimidated by the Indian problems.³⁶¹ As George writes, life was precarious:

"I recollect on one occasion when there was a suden alarm and all the families that were on the south side of the River had [to] swim over the best that they could so as to get the River between them and the indians. Some who could swim well would swim over and make a fire to let the others swim to it as it was Exceedingly dark. Little fellows from seven to ten years old would lay flat upon a log or chunk of wood and make for the other side and Really, I never heard of the first one geting drown."³⁶²

did move last to a farm near Jonesborough, then he kept the house northeast of the town. Conway's map (following footnote 91) proves that Wright's house in 1821 was located north of Red River.



Note: See H.K. Brown Letter, *Steely Collection*, Mary Kegley File.
Miller County Court House was at Wright Home after 1822.

The settlers would fight back, however, and try their best to remove the trouble-making Indians from the area:

" . . . as soon as the families were all safe, the men Returned and gathered what Choctaws they could and whiped the indians clear out of the country and in about two weeks all was at home again as well contented as though nothing had passed of any nature."³⁶³

Of course, things weren't that simple, even though civilization was spreading. Cantonment Towson, just west of the Kiamichi River mouth, was established first in 1824 when the influx of Indians began to come from the east. However, this was

²³⁴ Mary Vivian Daniel (*MVD*) *Papers*, Genealogical Notes, 21. Martin and Henrietta Wright married in 1823. He was born in 1794 at St. Louis, and moved to Texas about 1819.

²³⁵ John Gould Fletcher, *Arkansas* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1947), 51-53. White, *Politics*, 3-7.

²³⁶ George Travis Wright *Papers*, lone Lewis Copies, 3.

²³⁷ White, *Politics*, 25 & 26. The bill to split Hempstead County was introduced by John English. *Arkansas Gazette*, February 12, 1820, 2:3; Bill introduced to create Miller County. *Gazette*, February 26, 1820, 1:3; Act is printed, to take effect April 1, 1821, *Gazette*, July 22, 1820, 1:1.

²³⁸ Actually, there is no evidence of official alcaldes being stationed or elected along the Red River. Mexican officials might have come through the area on rare occasion.

²³⁹ White, *Politics*, 17.

²⁴⁰ Hempstead County, Arkansas, *Order Book A*, June 28, 1818-March, 1822. Found in Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, Washington, Arkansas. Typed copies have been done by Mary Medearis, archivist. (*Steely Papers*, Southwest Arkansas Research Files, 14, 44 & 47).

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, August Term, 1820. The United States vs. James Williams, indicted for accepting a challenge to fight a duel.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, March Term, 1821. Philip Hoag and James vs. Even Lowrey?, order of the court that "Claiborne Wright be required to file on or before the first day of the next term of this Court all papers [of the] proceedings in the above cause."

²⁴³ Fletcher, *Arkansas*, 54. Governor Miller left Washington, D.C. in September and arrived in Arkansas Post the day after Christmas. Crittenden had been acting governor to that point.

²⁴⁴ White, *Politics*, 19.

²⁴⁵ *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 51 & 52, or White, *Politics*, 19.

²⁴⁶ Marie Cash, "Arkansas In Territorial Days," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, I, 223-234. Experienced in governmental affairs, Miller noted that Crittenden had declared Arkansas a "second grade" Territory, which allowed the state to elect its representatives. Miller (page 227) addressed the Assembly on February 10, 1820, asking them to petition Congress to raise the grade from a Territory of the first grade to a Territory of the second grade, which would entitle the Territory of Arkansas to have an elected Council. Thus, eventually, Crittenden's actions before Miller arrived were upheld.

²⁴⁷ White, *Politics*, 22, *Arkansas Gazette*, December 25, 1819. Austin received 179 votes to Bates' 12. However, in Polaski and Arkansas County, Austin polled none. Most likely he was not on the ballot.

²⁴⁸ Harry S. Ashmore, *Arkansas, A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1978), 14. White, *Politics*, 25.

²⁴⁹ Mary Vivian Daniel *Papers*, Genealogical Notes, 15. Miss Daniel says Alexander Wetmore Wright was born in Shawneetown. Neville, *History of Lamar County*, 24, says it was Jonesborough. Neville also says the Wrights lived in three homes, on the south side of the river only.

²⁵⁰ *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 329. Henry Conway's map that accompanied his

not much relief for the Miller County citizens. They felt many times that even the United States Army harassed those settlers living on the north side of the Red River!

For many years the Wrights and most of the initial inhabitants of the Anglo-Americans settling in the Pecan Point vicinity lived in harmony with most of the Indians, building a good reputation based upon Claiborne's knowledge and the experience of the Wetmore brothers. John Hopkins Fowler had to walk the tightrope of popularity between the whites and Indians, though, because of a confusing situation that began with the first Factory (governmental trading post) established in southwestern Arkansas Territory. It was managed by another man named, John Fowler!³⁶⁴

Location of Sulphur Fork Factory



LOCATION OF SULPHUR FORK FACTORY IN
PRESENT MILLER COUNTY, ARKANSAS

Copied from *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII, 168. Russell Magaghi, "Sulphur Fork Factory, 1817-1822."

In October, 1817, this particular Captain John Fowler had requested from Thomas L. McKenney, the superintendent of Indian Trade, permission to begin a Factory in the southwestern Arkansas area.³⁶⁵

After McKenney selected the location to be on the Sulphur Fork of the Red River, near where today stands the town of Fort Lynn, Arkansas, Fowler began preparations to build. At that time, this was to be the third Factory in Arkansas, and one of 31 such establishments created to carry on fur trade with the Indians.

The Factory system originated in 1795.³⁶⁶ United States officials, later including even President Thomas Jefferson, hoped to eliminate foreign and unlicensed traders from dealing with the Indians. It was hoped this plan would cause various tribes to be dependent upon the American government within time. Not only were the trading houses instructed to gain the friendship of Indians, they were also to teach them agricultural techniques.³⁶⁷

Deviously, perhaps, Jefferson and others saw this as a way to tame the Indians, making them dependent upon the white man's

letter to Secretary of War J.C. Calhoun dated October 19, 1821, places the Miller County Court House at this location, 10-12 miles down River from the mouth of the Kiamichi. The Court House was also Claiborne Wright's home. This is the only positive information left to identify even one of Claiborne's farms.

Captain John Fowler, who came from the eastern portion of the United States, hoped the Factory's doors would attract the trade of the Caddo, in particular, who roamed along both sides of the Red River.³⁶⁸ But, the Spanish still held a greater influence over the Caddo chief (Grand Cados), as Fowler reported to the Caddo Agent, John Jamison, in April of 1819:

A hand-drawn map of a portion of Clark County, Mississippi. The map is oriented with the Mississippi River on the left. Key features include:

- Geographical Features:**
 - Mississippi River:** The large body of water on the left side of the map.
 - Miller County Fork:** A tributary of the Mississippi River.
 - Mountain Fork:** A tributary of the Miller County Fork.
 - Rolling Fork:** A tributary of the Mountain Fork.
 - Golden Creek:** A tributary of the Rolling Fork.
 - Clear Creek:** A tributary of the Golden Creek.
 - Little River:** A tributary of the Golden Creek.
 - Saline River:** A tributary of the Little River.
 - Mine Creek:** A tributary of the Saline River.
 - Dzan:** A tributary of the Mine Creek.
 - Cossatot River:** A tributary of the Saline River.
 - Red River:** A tributary of the Little River.
- Landmarks and Infrastructure:**
 - Miller County Court House:** Located near the intersection of the Little River and the Red River.
 - Extensive Improvements:** A label along the Little River.
 - Salt Works:** Located near the intersection of the Saline River and the Mine Creek.
 - Large Valuable Farms:** Located near the intersection of the Saline River and the Mine Creek.
 - Hempstead Courthouse:** Located near the intersection of the Dzan and the Mine Creek.
 - Mill:** Located near the intersection of the Clear Creek and the Golden Creek.
- County Boundaries:**
 - Miller County:** The area on the left side of the map, bounded by the Mississippi River.
 - Clark County:** The area on the right side of the map.
 - Mississippi County Boundary:** A line running vertically through the center of the map.

"[The Caddo Chief] . . . has lately returned after a four or five months tour to the westward and from his conduct I have little doubt he was among the Spaniard and probably received new presents with old advice. He was here a few days since, was very insolent and full of threats."³⁶⁹

A request by Captain Fowler made on December 29, 1819, to Captain Coomb, who was then camped on the Red River near Kiamichi, would result in the rough reputation the Army officer would gain with the Pecan Point, Clear Creek and Jonesborough residents. This attitude surely caused John Hopkins Fowler trouble, especially with more recent settlers who perhaps confused him with the Indian Factor. In a letter to Coomb, Captain

Chapter 5:

²⁵¹ This description is from family lore and is the impression several, like Brunetta Griffith, have of Henrietta's looks.

²⁵² There is much speculation on this point. Most likely Claiborne Wright owned land either near where the Kiomitia Wright Plantation is today, or somewhere near Gabriel Martin's survey east of current Highway 37. The late Ruth Rees Milligan of Blackwell, Oklahoma, a great grand-daughter, said she remembers once having a Spanish Grant document in her papers, but had long since misplaced it. Below is the genealogy of Adam Lawrence's place, which most likely is the same, or part of the same, piece of land that George Wright would own in the early 1830's.

MOUND PRAIRIE IMPROVEMENT					
First Tract	Bought	Sold	Adjoining Tract	Bought	Sold
Adam Lawrence:			John Chumley:		
to Jesse Shelton	ca 1815-1818		to Marmaduke Santiford		
" John Chumley			" Mitchell Crownover		
" James R. Anderson			" Adam Lawrence		
" James Walters (Property now combined)			" James Walters		
Walters to James J. Ward, Jr. 5/29/1824;					
to James J. Ward, Jr. 5/27/1826					
James J. Ward, Jr.					
sold both tracts to B. Sam Worthington April 5, 1830					

This land was located on the south bank of the Red River, above a point opposite the mouth of the Kiamichi River, in Wavell's Colony-known as the Mound Prairie Improvement. Sale price: Ward to Worthington, \$100. See, *George Travis Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies (*Steely Papers* File, 34).

There are numerous ways to spell Kiamichi. Examples: Kiomitia, Kiamichi, Kiamisy, Kiamichia, Kiamisha, etc. The spellings, Kiamichi for the River, and Kiomichia for the plantation area, are used in this book.

²⁵³ *Red River County Map*, Lee Map Company, Dallas, Land ownership (*Steely Papers*) Also, *Abstract of All Original Texas Land Titles Comprising Grants and Locations To August 31, 1941* (General Land Office, Austin, 1941), 809. Gabriel Martin obtained certificate No. 306 on 6/10/1854 (by heirs). It was patent No. 852, IX, 3,558.84 acres, 1st class, File No. 110.

Martin received another piece of land totaling 942.36 acres in Red River County, but it was farther to the east. Filed on the same date by the heirs, 1st Class Certificate No. 306, patent No. 853, IX, file No. 110. The home place was located on the Red River near where the Bason's Mill Creek now enters the Red. (Bason's Mill Creek is also called Collier Creek) Dr. George

Fowler said:

"I think it proper to inform you that there are several white persons [one probably being Bob Musick] settled in the Cherokee Village (opposite the Old Delaware Village on the west bank of the Red river) for the purpose of trading with Indians. These men have no License to trade or do it in direct violation of the Laws."³⁷⁰

In an earlier letter to McKenney, written in September, Fowler had identified his most constant problem as being traders who rendezvoused principally about "Pacon Point," where they were keeping the Indians drunk!³⁷¹ He also mentioned that murders among the groups were frequent. He specifically pinpointed Bob Musick and a trader by the name of [Cherokee John] Williams, as being the most trouble:

"Williams, and a fellow by the name of Music, have plundered these Indians of nearly the whole of a valuable stock of cows, Hogs, Horses, etc. A gentleman informs me he has seen Williams receive a Cow for two Gallons of whiskey which he sold for thirty Dollars immediately after-This fellow was driven from the Arkansas country by Major Bradford, who commands the post there, fifteen months ago-he is [now] under an infamous character."³⁷²

Captain Fowler went on to mention that he was also told that two Indians were killed "lately by drunken white men-one at Music's house, the other near Pacon Point."³⁷³ He commented that a half-blood Indian who had acted as an interpreter for him had been beaten by Musick and Williams:

"I think, Sir, Williams and Music and a few others such Characters should be certainly driven off the public lands and a proper examination made relative to the murder of the two Indians."³⁷⁴

Bason apparently named the creek after he married Martin's widow, Henrietta, in 1836.

²⁵⁴ George W. Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 1817 (George Wright's *Memoirs*), unpublished account of life in or near Pecan Point from 1817 through late 1830's, 4.

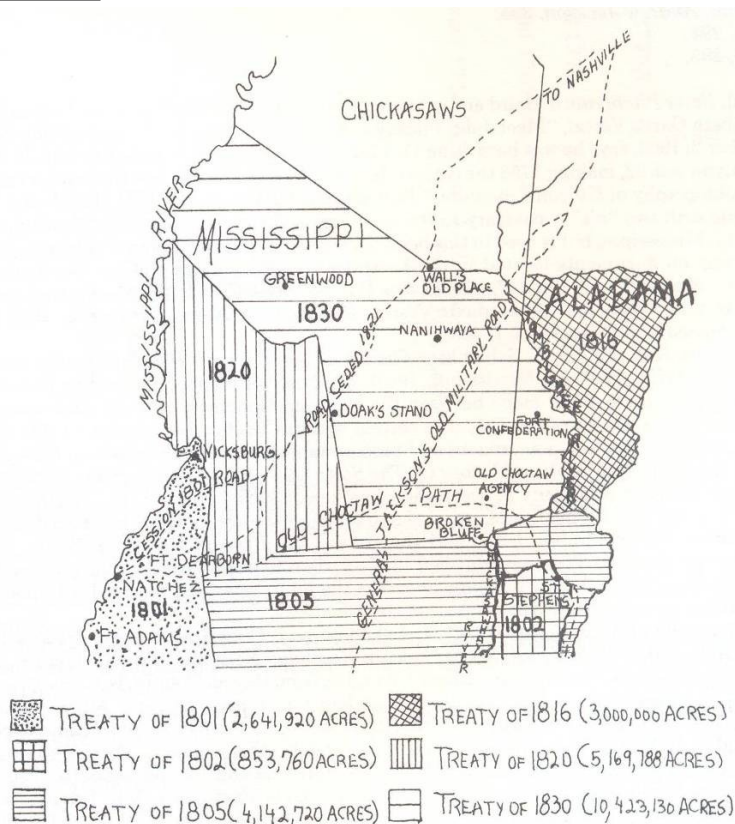
²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵⁷ Grant Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers* (Norman, 1936), 147, and W. David Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn: Chief Of The Choctaws* (Norman, 1972), 14 & 25. The Choctaw Nation at that time had no single chief. Mushulatubbee was in charge of the Northeastern (Upper Town) District; Apukshunnubbe of the Northwestern (Upper Town) District; and Pushmataha of the Six Town District.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Also, Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., *The Removal Of The Choctaw Indians* (Knoxville, 1960), 29, and Angie Debo, *Choctaw Republic* (Norman, 1934), 34. The Treaty of Fort Adams in 1801 had given the United States the right to construct a road from Natchez to Nashville, and relinquished 2,641,920 acres to the United States; the Treaty of Hoe Buckintoopa, at Fort Confederation in 1802, surrendered another 853,760 acres north of Mobile; the Treaty of Mount Dexter, in 1805, saw the Choctaws cede the southern part of their territory, 4,142,720; and in the Treaty of Fort St. Stephens, in 1816, they surrendered the remainder of their land east of the Tombigbee, approximately another 3,000,000 acres. The Nation gave up their last 10,423,130 acres in the Treaties of 1825 and Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830. Thus, for 13,000,000 in Indian Territory, the Choctaw Nation surrendered nearly 20 million acres of land that once comprised most of the state of Mississippi and a portion of western Alabama. There were certain monetary considerations given by the United States, but much "corruptness" and greed lessened this amount.

Apparently the majority of the Pecan Point settlers agreed with Captain Fowler on this point. However, the inhabitants disagreed with him when he fired off another correspondence in September to McKenney, suggesting that now it was time to place restrictions on frontier settlers and properly enforce such settlement regulations. Of course, he was sincerely trying to protect the Indians from unscrupulous traders, according to the tone of his letters. He thought there was a simple solution:

"This can be done effectually by prohibiting the settlement of all Lands not surveyed and authorized to be sold by Government-this would be a clear definition and all would know how to act. "³⁷⁵



²⁵⁹ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 148.

²⁶⁰ For a detailed description of the expeditions Pushmataha made west of the Mississippi, see Ruth Tenison West, "Pushmataha's Travels," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, XXXVII (Spring 1959, Winter 1960), 162-174. For example, Pushmataha knew the map Jackson presented at Doak's Stand in 1820 was incorrect. ". . . he [Jackson] had offered to swap me an undefined portion of Mexican territory. . . I know a line running due south from the source of the Canadian [River] would never touch any portion of the Red River. . ." (163). Chief Pushmataha, in fact, had explored the west as early as the 1780's and on one trip, his second expedition, in 1784, his hunting party was attacked by enemy Indians while camped near the Red River. Pushmataha escaped and eventually found a Spanish settlement some place in the vicinity of the Red River on the old Spanish trail that went through Southwestern Oklahoma. He remained with them several months before returning to the Nation with several scalps around his waist. See Anna Lewis, *Chief Pushmataha: American Patriot* (New York, 1959), 24 & 25. The Choctaw left behind traces of their expeditions. For example, they thought two rivers, the Owa Chito and the Washita, were the same rivers. They called them both Owa Chito, meaning "big hunt." Later, when it was learned there were two rivers, the spelling was changed on the western tributary of Red River to "Washita," instead of

Shortly before this letter, there had already been a suggestion made to move the Indian Agency closer to the bulk of the Indian population. Back in June, 1819, John Jamison at the Red River Agency in Natchitoches, wrote his thoughts to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun:

"Permit me to suggest the propriety of including all Red River within the bounds of this agency and of removing it to Kiamisha beyond which I am told by a late order whites are not permitted to settle."³⁷⁶

Ouachita (24).

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 395.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn*, 6. Baird and other references say John Pitchlynn was born in 1756. Elizabeth Garth Vestal, "Meet John Pitchlyn, A Colorful Character," *Birmingham News*, October 2, 1966, says he was born June 11, 1745. Gideon Lincecum, a cousin, says, in 1818, Pitchlynn was 62, making 1756 the correct date, which is used here. See Gideon Lincecum, "Autobiography of Gideon Lincecum," *Publications Of Mississippi* VIII (1904), 472. The spelling with two "n's" is contrary to the marking on the grave stone near Waverly, Clay County, Mississippi, but is used in this book because this is the way John Pitchlynn spelled his name on documents located in the Lowndes Chancery Clerk's office. See Lowndes County, *Estate No. 57, Box 147, File No.5 or Probate Book C*, 352-363. Most seem to agree he was nine when his father died. Vestal, *Birmingham News*, October 2, 1966 and *Encyclopaedia of Mississippi*, I, 430.

²⁶⁶ Jesse O. McKee and Jon A. Schlenker, *The Choctaws: Cultural Revolution Of A Native American Tribe* (Jackson, Mississippi, 1980), 37. The conference was held in Hopewell, S.C., the first such treaty made between the U.S. and Choctaws. Among other things it provided that a citizen of the U.S. who settled within Choctaw boundaries would forfeit protection from the U.S. government and become subject to tribal jurisdiction. Also, John Haywood, *Civil And Political History Of The State Of Tennessee* (Knoxville, 1969), 37 & 225. The Treaty was actually between the Cherokees, Chickasaws and the Choctaws with the U.S. government. The Cherokees agreed to be under the laws of the U.S. Other disputed boundaries between Indian lands and the states were fixed at this time. Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn*, 8, says the Treaty established the U.S. right to place three trading posts within Choctaw boundaries. John Pitchlynn served as the interpreter and received a permanent assignment to that post at the request of the Choctaws.

²⁶⁷ *Encyclopaedia of Mississippi History*, 1,430. Haywood, *Civil And Political History* 262.

²⁶¹ Remini, *Andrew Jackson*, 395.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 294.

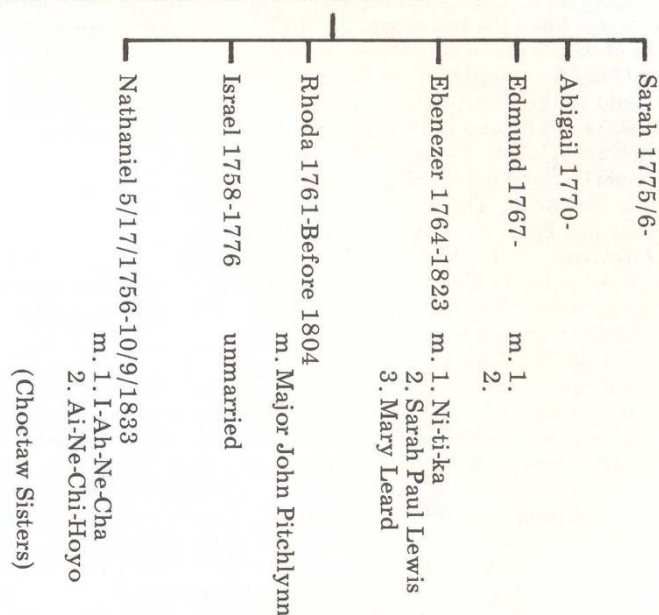
²⁶⁸ Angie Debo, *The Rise And Fall Of The Choctaw Republic* (Norman, 1934), 37. The Folsoms came with their parents, Israel and Marie Chambre, from Rowan County, N.C. See Czarina C. Conlan, "David Folsom," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, IV (1926), 340, and, Muriel Wright, "Tryphena," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, IX (1931), 182. The family originally came to New England in 1636 from Hingham, England. The three brothers came to Mississippi in the 1770's, apparently. See *Steely Papers*, Margaret Hale File and Lucille Ledbetter File for much more taken from *Folsom Family Association Genealogy Book*, Vol. I & II (1938). Roger Foulsham is listed first, from Necton County, Norfolk, Eng. (Vol. I, 16-19). John Folsom¹ came from Hingham County, Norfolk, England to America in 1638 and settled in Hingham, Massachusetts. He died in Exeter, New Hampshire. Israel Folsom³ (third generation in America) moved his family to New Jersey before 1749. His son, Nathaniel⁴ was born in Connecticut, married in New Jersey (or North Carolina) and died in Edgecomb County, North Carolina. He and Rachel Berry of Greenland, New Hampshire, had one son, Israel⁶, father of Nathaniel, Israel, Rhoda, Ebenezer, Edmund, Abigail, and Sarah (Vol. II, 810-813). Israel⁵ died in Natchez, Mississippi in 1784, eight

Jamison was convinced that if the agency were located near the mouth of the Kiamichi, and perhaps the trading post too, he would be nearer the greater concentration of Indians west of the Sabine River. He suggested that under the current limitations of his influence, it was difficult to control offenders in the extreme western portion of his agency's assigned territory. He mentioned that so many immigrants were "flocking" to the Pecan Point area that the agency's influence would *have* to be moved farther west to avoid "Constant Collision" with the settlers and state authorities.³⁷⁷

Despite the troubles, during the two years he served in the capacity of Factor, Captain Fowler shipped to New Orleans 30,000 deer skins, 691 bear skins, 455 beaver pelt, and 1,183 otter, fox,

years after his wife, Maryambre, had passed away at Fort St. Stephens, Georgia (or Ala.). Nathaniel⁶, Israel⁶, Rhoda⁶ & Ebenezer⁶ were born in Rowan County, North Carolina. Edmund⁶, Rhoda⁶ and Israel⁶ died in Mississippi, Nathaniel⁶ in Indian Territory and Ebenezer⁶ in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Family Chart for Israel Folsom and Marie Chambre:



²⁶⁹ *Steely Papers*, Lucille Ledbetter Files, Folsom Family Charts. *Folsom Family Association Genealogy Book*, II, 810-813. This brings to an end the speculation that Rhoda was a daughter of Ebenezer, or one of Nathaniel's huge family. Rhoda and John Pitchlynn had James and John, Jr. (Jack) for sure and possibly a third, Joseph

²⁷⁰ Haywood, *Civil And Political History*, 430. The Spanish had warned Pitchlynn that if he participated in the Hopewell Conference, he would "forfeit his effects" from the Spanish.

²⁷¹ Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn*, 6. He says Rhoda died in 1805. It would *have* been no later than April, 1805, for John and his second wife, Sophia, had their first child, Peter Perkins, on January 30, 1806.

²⁷² *Folsom Family Association Book*, II, 828-829. Sophia Folsom, daughter of Ebenezer and his first wife, Ni-Ti-Ka (Tehani) was born December 27, 1773 in Mississippi. Her mother either died at her birth or Ebenezer left her and went to Arkansas. Sophia was probably raised by Nathaniel Folsom, accounting for the 25th child in his family. He only mentions 24 in H.B. Cushman, *History Of Choctaw, Chickasaw And Natchez Indians* (New York, 1962), 327. However, there is some speculation she was raised by her uncle, Edmund. See *Steely Papers*, Lucille Ledbetter file.

raccoon and wildcat pelages.³⁷⁸ However, he was constantly writing about the competition he had with the whiskey traders, vying for business among the Indian tribes, and with those who cared more for agricultural pursuits than with hunting.

A frustrated Fowler wrote McKenney in November, 1819, that his force of nine men, who were not above hitting the bottle either, were not capable of solving the whiskey running traffic. In one letter, he even said the guards broke into the Factory building and stole 15 gallons of whiskey.³⁷⁹

Having enough of the troubles, which grew as the Spanish poured more effort into the situation, Captain Fowler left the position in apparent ill health during June, 1820. He was reported

²⁷³ Cushman, *History of Indians*, 328. He married Aiahnichih Ohoyoh and Iahnecha, "nieces of Miko Puskush, father of Moshulatubbee, making the sisters first cousins to the chief.

²⁷⁴ *Pioneer Society Annals* (Columbus, Mississippi, 1936), III, 14. This is a collection of papers by interested historians in Lowndes County. For example: "In a drunken brawl, John [Jack] Pitchlynn, Jr. killed his half-brother, Silas, escaped to the Chickasaw settlements at Cottonport Gin, where he was later killed by a hired assassin--said to have been Garland Lincecum--at the instigation of his step-mother (Sophia). He was buried as he fell--pistols, watch, money, etc. Also, Lincecum, *Publications of Mississippi*, VIII, 475, ". . . John Pitchlynn, Jr. was a highly educated man and a very clever fellow; but a most incorrigible drunkard." Also, in an article by William Love, "Lowndes County," *Publications Of Mississippi*, VII, (1903), 365-366, a manuscript by J.P. Lincecum of Lincecum, Louisiana says, "Constantly trailed by other Indians, he was guarded by Garland Lincecum. One night when the two separated briefly, John [Jack] was shot to death. . ." Thus, the story of Jack's death is confused even more.

²⁷⁵ *Source Material For Mississippi History, Lowndes County*, XLIV, Part 1, 365. "Major John Pitchlynn, a friend of the Choctaws. . . owned fifty slaves, a large amount of livestock, and cultivated 200 acres of land in this county. (Taken from *Publications of Mississippi*, IX). See also, Lowndes County *Estate* 92, Box 147, File 7. An inventory filed by Pitchlynn's son-in-law, Samuel Garland, listed value of estate at \$43,744.24 in 1837. Much of the total was in notes due the Major. The bill of sale for the estate was only \$5,327. Remember, Pitchlynn by now had given most of his land to his family.

²⁷⁶ Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn*, 10. Pitchlynn used his biblical knowledge to refute Tecumseh's prophecies. Also, Anna Lewis, *Chief Pushmataha*, 67. Pitchlynn was an interpreter during the meetings and gave the gist of Pushmataha's speech to Tecumseh to H.B. Cushman, who later wrote his book on Indian history.

²⁷⁷ Refer back to Chapter III, "Creek War."

²⁷⁸ "Assumption based upon some evidence. Also Lois Wood Burkhalter, *Gideon Lincecum, 1793-1874*, (Austin, 1965), 27. ". . . Mushulatubi resided on the military road, which, previous to the advent of steamboats on the Mississippi River, was the great thoroughfare upon which returned the hosts of flatboat men from Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana. . ." says Lincecum. See George J. Leftwich, "Cotton Gin Port and Gaines' Trace," *Publications of Mississippi*, VII, 269. "Peachland's" was a famous place in early frontier days. Therefore, from this one can assume that Claiborne Wright had to have met Pitchlynn here on his way back to Carthage in 1811, after his trip to New Orleans by steamboat.

²⁷⁹ *Pioneer Society Annals*, III, 14. Pitchlynn was First Interpreter to McKee January 1-31, 1814; and was with Blue August 16, 1814-April 15, 1815. Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn*, 12. He says James Pitchlynn also served with the American forces.

²⁸⁰ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 148.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² "Muriel H. Wright, "Brief Outline Of The Choctaw And Chickasaw Nations," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, VII (March-December, 1929), 393. Others in the

dead six months later, as of December 9.³⁸⁰ Captain Fowler's goods were sold by his friend and business compatriot, Larken Edwards, on April 6, 1821.³⁸¹

Two years after Captain Fowler's death, the entire system of Factories was closed by the government as a result of pressure from the pelt industry, including all three Factories located in Arkansas. The Post was never moved to the Kiamichi River.

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John Hopkins Fowler was alive and well, still living in Pecan Point working with his uncle and cousins, establishing a farm

party were: Daniel McCurtain, Talking Warrior, Red Fort, and John [James] L. McDonald.

²⁸³ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 158. Puckshunubbe and Pushmataha, as well as old Mushulatubbee, have left great legends in their wake, but perhaps the best is the story the witty and humorous Pushmataha told in 1805 to a young lieutenant who asked, during a meeting at Fort St. Stephens, "Who was considered the greatest warrior among you?" The Chief answered, "I was considered the greatest warrior, but found out that it was not the case when returning from a visit we paid President Washington at Philadelphia." Probably using John Pitchlynn as the interpreter, the lieutenant again asked, "How did you make the discovery?"

Pushmataha replied, hiding his humor, "The President sent us by ship to New Orleans, and when we were at sea, entirely out of sight of land, a storm came upon us. The waves were so high they seemed to almost kiss the clouds and the ship rolled about among them until I thought that we would never again see the beautiful hills and valleys, forests and streams of our beloved country; and our bones would be scattered on the bottom of the strange waters instead of resting peaceful with our departed relations.

The Chief kept on, partaking of the wine that was bountiful, saying, "All this alarmed me—I found that I had not the firmness in danger and the utter fearlessness of death of a great warrior, and concluded to go down in the cabin to see how my friend Puck-she-nubbee was affected by this new and strange danger. And what do you think he was doing?"

The Lieutenant eagerly asked, "What was he doing?"

"Why," said the old Chief, with a very grave face, but a humorous twinkle in his eyes, "Why, he was making love to an old squaw we took along to cook for us, and he seemed to be as unconcerned about the danger as if he was at home in his own cabin sitting by the fire, and listening to the songs of the winds among the trees!" See West, *Chronicles Of Oklahoma* 171 & 172. Or, Joel Campbell DeBose, *Sketches of Alabama History* (Philadelphia, 1901), 60. This can be read in its entirety online in 2007 at:

<http://books.google.com/books?>

[id=FzrXHf5LmcC&pg=PA60&lpg=PA60&dq=%22said+the+old+chief+with+a+very+grave+face%22&source=web&ots=-mx8QWGCg&sig=z7MTj6Swk5QSKZ1lgD8qznpDi9o#PPA1,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=FzrXHf5LmcC&pg=PA60&lpg=PA60&dq=%22said+the+old+chief+with+a+very+grave+face%22&source=web&ots=-mx8QWGCg&sig=z7MTj6Swk5QSKZ1lgD8qznpDi9o#PPA1,M1).

²⁸⁴ Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn*, 99. For years the tribe, led by Peter Pitchlynn's efforts, fought to receive what they thought the treaty of 1820 gave them: ". . . they argued, the tribe had removed to lands previously guaranteed to them. . . and thus had relinquished the ten million Mississippi acres without any substantial consideration." The government sold these lands, and even after deducting survey and administrative expenses, it had reaped a huge profit. The "net proceeds" of this sale, the Choctaws maintained, were part of the tribal estate, for the 18th article of the treaty of 1830 provided that "the lands hereby ceded are to remain [in] a fund pledged to the fulfillment of the treaty provisions." In 1889, Congress finally appropriated over \$3,000,000. One-half went to attorneys! The heirs of the old 1853 delegation that fought for the payment received \$638,944, Peter Pitchlynn's share being \$107,311.29. However, he was dead, having passed away in Washington, D.C. January 17, 1881. He had died penniless (210), buried just yards away from Pushmataha on the banks of the Anacostia River (211), in Congressional Cemetery.

²⁸⁵ Gideon Lincecum, "Life Of Apushmataha," *Publications Of Mississippi*, IX (1905), 419n.

community. He was building a solid trust with himself and the residents there. When the post office for Miller County was created on September 5, 1824, he was named as the first postmaster, beginning a vigorous six-year period as a successful politician in the area.³⁸²

In late 1825, he found for himself a bride, after remaining one of the more eligible bachelors at Pecan Point, Clear Creek and Jonesborough for eight years. Betsy Woodson Barnett Denton, the widow of Thomas Johnson Denton, attracted his attention, and they were married in December. He was also serving as clerk of the circuit court at that time.³⁸³

Despite the difficulties of life in the Valley, more good

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 419. Also, for the tale of his creation, see Anna Lewis, *Chief Pushmataha*, 15. The chief delighted in telling journalists and interested parties long tales of his birth, in 1764, surrounding it with great mystery. Cushman, *History Of The Indians*, 324, tells about the same story, giving a different setting.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Herman J. Viola, *Thomas L. McKenney: Architect Of America's Early Indian Policy, 1816-1830* (Chicago, 1974), 130-132. The delegation's expenses totaled \$7,463, of which \$2,149 was for liquor! All the group did not return immediately. Cole came down with ulcers and asked McDonald and McCurtain to stay behind with him until he was well. McKenney finally realized they would stay in Washington as long as money was given to them to live. The bill for the three at Josua Tennison's Inn on Pennsylvania Avenue \$1,502.23, including \$935 for liquor. McKenney was outraged! He asked Tennison, "How could the trio average \$8.40 a day for liquor?" He told the tribe the government would pay only \$3 per day for liquor, the tribe the rest.

²⁸⁹ Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn*, 36. The tribal desire to travel west remained cool despite a governmental sponsored expedition that included Peter Pitchlynn. Political division of the tribe, Mushulatubbee and the Pitchlynn vs. David Folsom and Greenwood LeFlore, caused delay, but the election of Jackson and pressure from the State of Mississippi altered the tribe's thinking by 1830. Then, it was a matter of logistics to move the tribe to Indian Territory. However, this took almost four years to complete. Harsh winter weather and sickness depleted a large amount of the tribe on their trip to the West.

²⁹⁰ *Steely Papers*, Genealogical Charts, Pitchlynn Line. Pitchlynn was strong for age 69. The previous July he had fathered his last child, Kiziah, and still had a large estate to handle.

²⁹¹ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 159.

²⁹² Assumption but most likely the pair met.

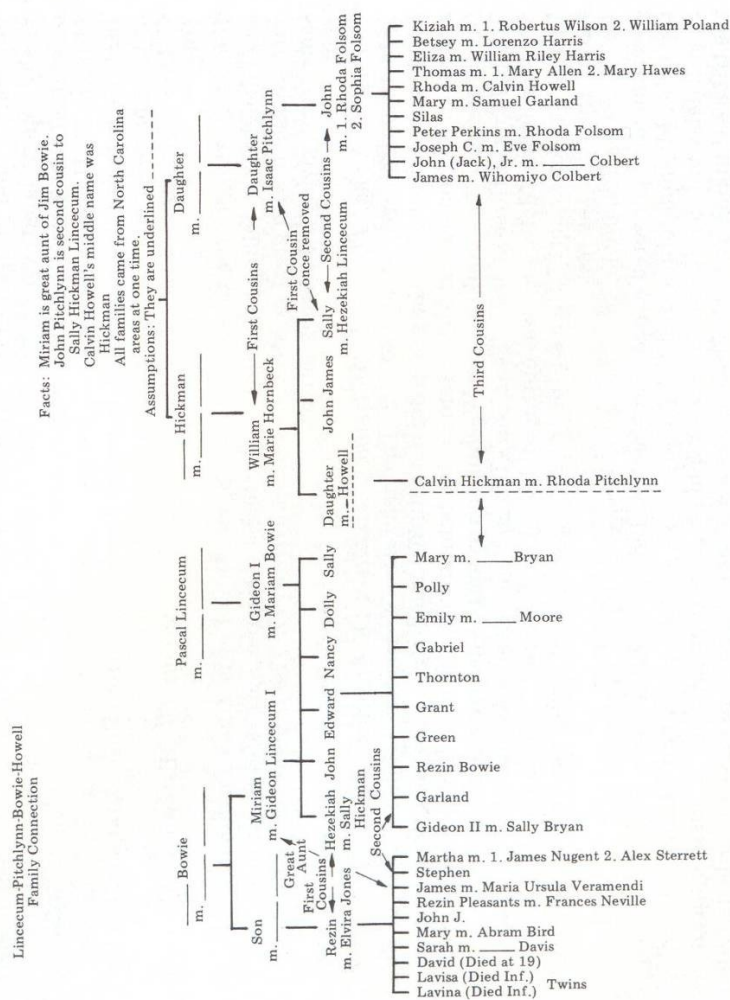
²⁹³ W.C.C. Claiborne, *Executive Journal*, 1801-1803 (Jackson, Mississippi, 1903), 491-492. Also W.E. Prout, *A Historical Documentation Of Plymouth*, Mississippi (Columbus, 1973), an unpublished study of Plymouth, 37. Claiborne wrote to Henry Dearborn on August 22, 1802, pointing out that "Pitchlynn is a useful man among the Choctaws. . ." and asked that the Major be paid his claim of \$300 per year for services from 1786-1792, for interpreting. Samuel Mitchell was Indian Agent for the Choctaws and wrote in 1798, ". . . his conduct is upright, and he is zealous for the interest of the United States. I do not believe, he has been, or can be corrupted by any man acting against the Government."

²⁹⁴ Lincecum, *Publications Of Mississippi*, VIII, 472 and Burkhalter, *Gideon Lincecum*, 1-7. Lincecum was born in Warren County, Georgia on April 22, 1793, and died in Long Point, Washington County, Texas on November 28, 1874. He left extensive notes on his life among the Indians, and was a business partner with Jack Pitchlynn. He lived in Georgia, South Carolina, Mississippi, Texas and Mexico, becoming a botanist in his later years. He is more or less designated as the founder of Columbus, Mississippi. If not for the loss of 900 pages of notes during the Civil War, more would have been known of his activities in Indian lands. He is buried in Austin, Row One, Austin plot.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

events were recorded around 1825 for the Wright family. Henrietta, now a woman of 21, had accepted the proposal two years earlier to marry Gabriel N. Martin, the early settler who had once been the Wrights' neighbor when Claiborne lived south of the River. William Claiborne Martin had been born to the couple in 1824 and made a nice playmate to Claiborne and Harriet's child, John. William Fowler Wright, Claiborne's eldest, now 22, was living in Hempstead County near the James Holman family.³⁸⁴ Frequent trips to Washington, Arkansas, the small but growing trading town at the end of the Southwest Trail, with sons George and Travis, were pleasant. George was tending the farmland south of the River for Claiborne, and Travis was beginning a small

Possible Connection Between Pitchlynn and Lincecum Families



²⁹⁶ Burkhalter, *Gideon Lincecum*, 25. "After George Washington commissioned him an interpreter among the Choctaws, Pitchlynn, on one of his trips to the capital, visited a month in Georgia with Gideon's parents." Also, see *Steely Papers*, Ledbetter File. Most accounts say William Blount commissioned him. However, Pitchlynn, according to one family account, knew George Washington. Supposedly Washington, accompanied by his half-brother, Lawrence, were in Barbados on military training and met with Isaac Pitchlynn while there, becoming good friends.

²⁹⁷ Assumption, based upon the chart estimation in footnote 42.

general store operation in Jonesborough. Claiborne was involved in a hot political battle for the Miller County Legislative Council seat with the post sutler at Cantonment Towson, Brigadier General William Bradford. Bradford had previously run two unsuccessful races for Arkansas Delegate to Congress, in 1821 and 1823.³⁸⁵ He had been appointed the head of the Arkansas Militia in June 1824, shortly after moving his family to the Kiamichi. Bradford had already roused the ire of many of Claiborne's allies because of his forcefulness and connection with Captain Coomb in 1819. But he was an honest man and popular with many.³⁸⁶ Claiborne was defeated by the politically experienced Bradford.

Hearing of a problem, Claiborne protested quickly, saying

²⁹⁸ Family lore tells of Calvin Howell as a physician. For sure, however, is the fact that his 13th child, Thomas Pitchlynn, born August 28, 1849, died July 16, 1943, became a doctor. See *Steely Papers*, T.P. Howell files, Biography Form, Works Progress Administration, *Indian-Pioneer History Project For Oklahoma*, June 1, 1937. Dr. Howell gives his father as a doctor, born in North Carolina, died when T.P. was 12 years old, in Eagletown, Oklahoma (buried there). His family lived just east of his mother's brother, Peter Perkins Pitchlynn. T.P. Howell studied at Center, Arkansas, Cumberland University at Lebanon, Tennessee and medical school at Baltimore, Maryland, graduating in the spring of 1872. He spent his summers between semesters visiting with Peter Pitchlynn in Washington. T.P. Howell and Dr. Israel W. Folsom set up practice in Atoka, Oklahoma, and operated a drug store there for two years. Howell sold out to Folsom and moved to Pauls Valley. In 1876, he moved to his present homestead, occupied in 1982 by his daughter, Laura Youngblood, three miles west and one mile north of Davis. His mother had settled a mile west of his place while he was in Baltimore at school. Dr. Howell married Lizzie Grant and Henrietta Wright, granddaughter of Claiborne Wright. Henrietta had been a governess in the nearby home of John Wright, Claiborne's son, until she fell in love with widower Dr. Howell. Other kin in the area included: Tom Grant, who married T.P. Howell's sister, Margaret Sophia; Arabella Pitchlynn, another sister, married 'Chester Ashley Wright; Mary Howell, another sister, widow of John Wright, married second, Brad Camp; and his sister Ellen married Matt Wolf. See *Steely Papers*, Genealogical Charts, Calvin Howell Line.

²⁹⁹ *Folsom Genealogy*, II, 828-829. This listing gives Calvin Howell's birthplace as either Kentucky or North Carolina. The cemetery in Eagletown where Howell and his son, Peter Pitchlynn Howell, are buried has been restored and cleaned with a wire fence placed around it. Rhoda moved the family after Calvin died October 1, 1865, according to family lore, to get away from the troublesome Pitchlynn clan. She lived until her 97th year, dying on February 28, 1911, and is buried beside Interstate 35 in the Howell Cemetery, three miles from her home.

³⁰⁰ Prout, *Documentation of Plymouth*, 61.

³⁰¹ Plymouth was located in the southeast corner of Section 10, Township 19, Range 17-E. Howell owned all section 10, part of section 9, and part of section 15. See map on page 85 in narrative. These were allotted to Howell by the United States, see Lowndes County *Deed Book* 16, page 35; *Deed Book* 12, page 26; *Survey Book*, T-19, R-17-E, sections 9 and 10. Calvin Howell's house was to be in the middle of the town, which was 1/2 mile by 1/2 mile square. It is speculated that Pierre Iberville agreed to establish a French trading post at a convenient point for the Choctaw and the Chickasaws. He selected, in 1702, a point on high land immediately south of the junction of the Tibbee and the Tombigbee, with a garrison of 20 soldiers. See *Pioneer Society Annals*, III, 13. For years there was an old, strange looking building on the location, commonly called a fort and supposedly built by Iberville's party. It was torn down in 1860. Plymouth "proved so unhealthy and the death rate so great that it was abandoned." Dr. W.L. Lipscomb, "History Of Columbus And Lowndes County," *Columbus Commercial*, January 15, 1901 (Printed in *Publications Of Mississippi*, V, 354-355).

³⁰² "Czarina C. Conlan, "Site Of Dancing Rabbit Creek Treaty Preserved," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, XII (March-December, 1929), 323. This famous hunting ground, located in current Noxubee County, Mississippi, was a natural

he had lost by a margin of only five votes, 107-102. The votes in Sevier Township were not correct.³⁸⁷ He must have been convincing enough to prove his point, for Bradford never showed up at Little Rock to claim otherwise. The session started on October 4, 1825, and the *Arkansas Gazette*, now in its fourth year of publication in Little Rock, reported:

"It will be seen, by reference to the proceedings in the Legislative Council that *Clayborn Wright, Esq.*, has been admitted to a seat in that house, in the room of Gen. William Bradford, who was the returned candidate from Miller County. No opposition was made on the part of Gen. Bradford, he not having made his appearance to claim his seat."³⁸⁸

amphitheater. About 6,000 Choctaw gathered in mid-September, 1830, to support their leaders against removal.

³⁰³ DeRosier, *Removal Of Choctaw Indians*, 123 and 162. By 1834 over 12,500 had removed to Indian Territory, but 6,000 elected to stay under the United States and Mississippi laws. However, their agent, William Ward, had failed to register then, apparently on purpose, which meant they had no legal right to retain their lands. The government eventually removed all but 1,500 by the end of the 19th Century.

³⁰⁴ Eventually five tribes called "civilized" nations would settle in Oklahoma: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee and Seminole. See Brunetta Bernard Griffith, *The Five Civilized Tribes: Trail Of Tears* (Madison Heights, Michigan, 1975). This is a pamphlet displaying art of the writer and short narratives about each tribe's removal to Oklahoma.

³⁰⁵ *Pioneer Society Annals*, III, 14. Land Grants to Pitchlynn family from negotiations at the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830.

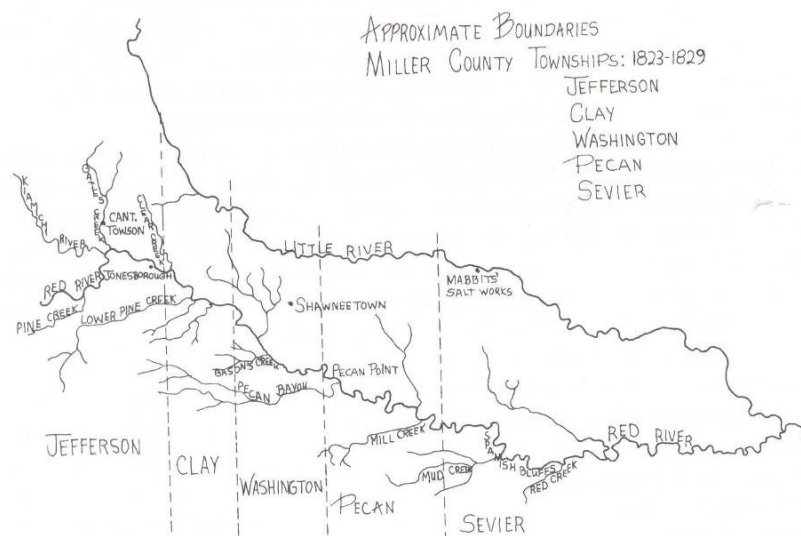
Treaty Of Dancing Rabbit Creek, 1830:			
John Pitchlynn, Sr.	.....	Sec. 27 & 34—T-19, R17-E	
John Pitchlynn, Jr.	.....	" 24 & 25—"	" " " "
Thomas "	.....	" 21	" " " " "
Silas "	.....	" 28	" " " " "
Peter "	.....	" 20	" " " " "
Peter "	.....	" 32	T 18 R16 "
Samuel Garland	.....	" 26	" 19 "17 "
Calvin Howell	.....	N.E.¼-9	" " " " "
" "	.....	Sec. 10	" " " " "
" "	.....	" 15	" " " " "

³⁰⁶ Lowndes County, *Estate No. 57, Box 147, File No. 5*. John Pitchlynn made guardian for John Pitchlynn and Hiram R. Pitchlynn, sons of Jack Pitchlynn, 3/4/1833. *Estate No. 92, Box 147, File No. 7*. John Pitchlynn made guardian for Alexander and Ebenezer Pitchlynn, sons of James Pitchlynn, 6/2/1834. Lowndes County, *Census of 1830*, 13. He also had 44 slaves to move.

³⁰⁷ Vestal, "Meet John Pitchlynn," *Birmingham News*, October 2, 1966. Pitchlynn decided to move, sold his lands and many of his slaves in 1835, but died before he could go west. He was buried temporarily in a field near the Waverly Mansion in Clay County, Mississippi.

"His funeral, like his life, was dramatic and unusual. Conducted after the manner of the Choctaws, all his war equipment was deposited with the coffin. His old warhorse was also brought to be killed and buried in the grave, but Judge Samuel Gholson of Aberdeen, who was present, intervened and assured the widow that a horse would be furnished him by the Great Spirit in the 'Happy Hunting Ground.' "

In 1929, a headstone was placed at John Pitchlynn's grave. It is doubtful his remains were still there by then. Most historians account that Sophia removed them to Indian Territory after finding the site damaged by vandals on one of her frequent trips back to Mississippi. Today, 1982, the stone is almost impossible to reach, located on an island of growth between two cultivated fields. Trees have fallen in all directions. But, somehow, "the Great Spirit"



Note: Part of Mill Creek was in Sevier Township. Later Washington Township included Jonesborough.

So, Claiborne was in the Assembly for the second time in three years. Aaron Hanscom accompanied him as the representative from Miller County, elected to serve in the House. In Little Rock, Claiborne renewed friendship with Ambrose H. Sevier, and no doubt conversed about the slave, Sam, that Claiborne had sold to Sevier in August, 1824, on a visit to the capital.³⁸⁹ Also, he met some new friends on the Legislative Council, which included these men in 1825: James M. Kuykendahl of Lawrence County; Johoiada Jeffery of Independence County; Alexander S. Walker of Pulaski County; John W. Calvert of Phillips County; Bartley Harrington of Arkansas County; Jacob Barkman of Clark County; Daniel T. Witter of Hempstead County; Josiah Hoskins of Chicot County; and William Quarles of Crawford County.³⁹⁰

Several acts of importance to Miller County were passed in the 26 days the Assembly met that Fall. Wright recorded votes on few controversial issues, however. He did vote against special sessions of the Superior Court, but it passed over his objections. The Assembly had two acts rejected by the new governor, George Izard, and rejected several themselves before the bills traveled too far through the legislative process.³⁹¹ The most interesting that went down to defeat was one that laid down stiff penalties for those who were living together as man and wife without being duly married.³⁹²

When the Territorial Legislature convened October 3, 1825, they had heard from Governor Izard, who was a bit peeved by the absence of Secretary Crittenden during the first days of his arrival in Arkansas. The Legislature also heard that the Quapaw Treaty, first requested in 1821, would be soon executed. The Indians would be removed to their reserve west of the Territory in the near future.³⁹³

Izard also announced that he was organizing a militia, and the Assembly authorized during the session that the printing of the Military laws of Arkansas Territory be completed. The other

mentioned by Gholston kept the stone untouched.

Assembly business of interest to Wright's constituents included a Memorial to the general government in Washington, D.C. to improve the navigation of the Red River. Also, compensation was approved to be paid to grand jurors. Wright's friend, Sevier, who later would be Arkansas' United States Senator for 12 years, submitted a bill to "repeal that part of the duelling law of 1820 which disqualified from holding office any person found guilty of issuing, delivering, or accepting a challenge." Sevier added the requirement that "all office holders swear they had not violated the act."³⁹⁴ Duels had been a constant problem in the political life of Arkansas from 1819.

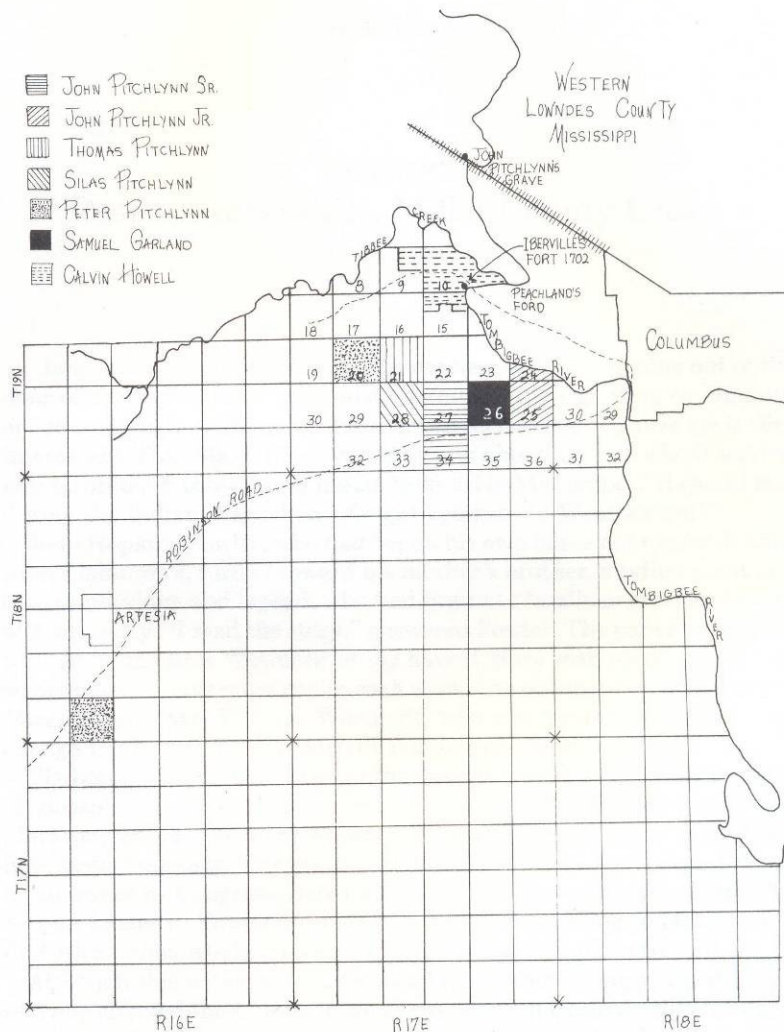


The militia issue was never quite organized and settled because, as Izard wrote to Secretary of State Henry Clay, the people in the area changed residences constantly. All commanding officers in units in Miller, Clark, and Hempstead Counties were supposed to report in person or by letter to General Bradford.³⁹⁵ However, Miller County residents were still upset at the actions taken against them in the past and placed no trust in the organization's leadership.

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By now the Choctaws were at the bottom of their

Photo of the Pitchlynn stone taken in 1982



Chapter 6:

³⁰⁸ Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock), March 31, 1821, 1:1-1:4.

³⁰⁹ Lonnie J. White, *Politics On The Southwestern Frontier, Arkansas Territory 1819-1836* (Memphis, 1964), 16-18.

³¹⁰ A.W. Neville, *History of Lamar County* (Paris, 1937), 242-243.

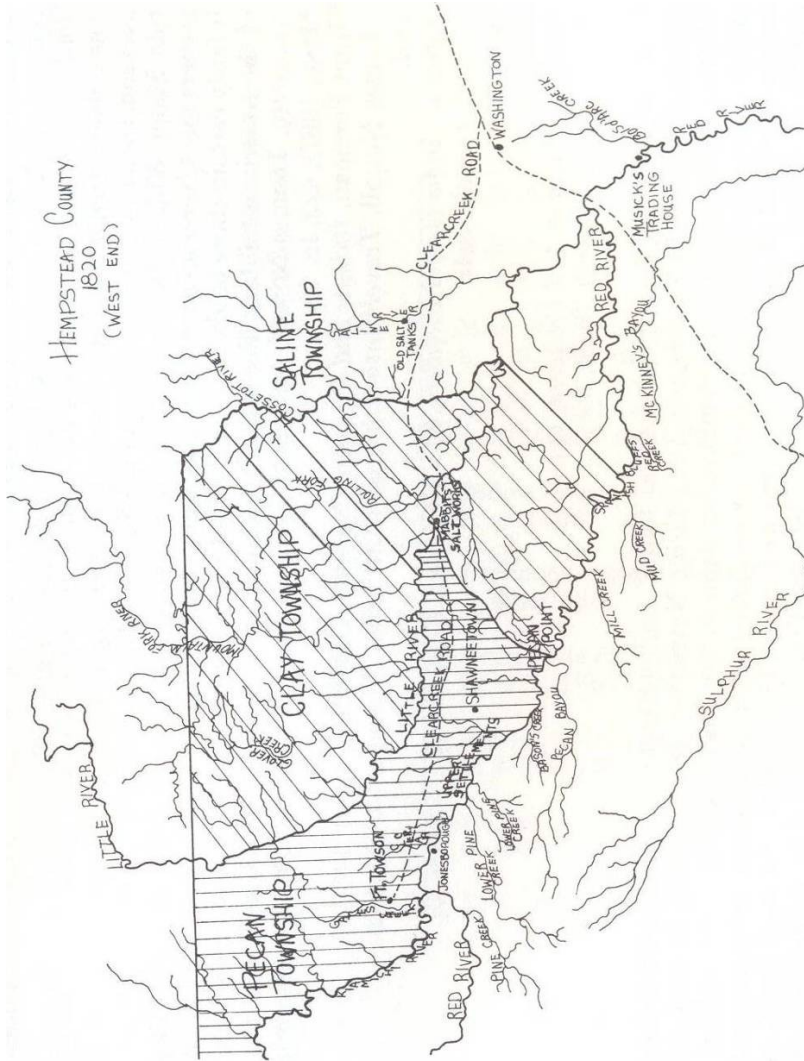
³¹¹ John L. Ferguson and J.H. Atkinson, *Historic Arkansas* (Little Rock, 1966),

negotiating ladder. They were about to bow to the wishes of Andrew Jackson, a man in whom they had placed complete confidence just a decade prior. However, he was determined to pay the Indians in money and promises for their land and move them west if they did not submit to the laws of the United States. Few Indians took the option of remaining in Mississippi. Major John Pitchlynn would stay. He had watched the eastern border of the new Choctaw lands change four times in the last seven years.³⁹⁶ He even had accompanied J.S. Conway and a group of surveyors in November of 1825, after the Treaty of Washington to see the land for himself and to report back to the tribe.³⁹⁷

Pitchlynn was a tired, disappointed man by the late 1820's,

27. They were: Lawrence, Arkansas, Pulaski, Clark and Hempstead.

³¹² White, *Politics*, 25. Also, Rex W. Strickland, "Miller County, Arkansas Territory, The Frontier That Men Forgot," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XVIII (March, 1940), 30. Dr. Strickland says that before July, 1821, Red River inhabitants lived in two of six townships in Hempstead County: Clay and Pecan Townships, both beginning on Mabbit's place (trading post on Red River) one to the east and one to the west.



³¹³ *Arkansas Gazette*, March 3, 1821, 3:4 & 5.

but substantially well-paid for his duties. His sons, Peter and James, were urging removal, but Major Pitchlynn, in his early 70's, began to have his doubts. His memory of Claiborne Wright's situation might have helped dim his enthusiasm. His age and the last 50 years of negotiations were telling on the man who had lived so many moons among his adopted people.

Just as Wright, Pitchlynn wanted to stay put in familiar surroundings. But, like Wright, he would eventually be forced to move. At first he urged his sons and daughters to stay in Mississippi. They did not listen. Instead, they followed the Choctaw Nation to what his descendents would someday call "Oklahoma."³⁹⁸

³¹⁴ If Claiborne Wright did not found Shawneetown, he must have at least had an influence in naming the community after the Illinois settlement of the same name. He worked in and out of that mid-western river town from 1814-1816 with Phillip Trammell and others, possibly even with William Mabbitt.

³¹⁵ Clarence E. Carter (ed.), *Territorial Papers of the United States, Territory of Arkansas, XIX* (Washington, 1940), 811.

³¹⁶ *Arkansas Gazette*, July 22, 1820, 1:2.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, November 25, 1820, 2:1. Why the court met at the Wright home is actually not known. Perhaps the leaders in the settlements thought the Wright house to be more centrally situated. Claiborne was a justice of the peace of Miller County in August 1820. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 819. He, Thomas Polk, Samuel Gates and Jacob G. Pennington served in the span of two days, suggesting that perhaps there was a court meeting of some kind in 1820. However, this would be eight months before the County was to begin court sessions. It is possible that this meeting was held at Hall's, and the group voted to move to Wright's location for the next court session.

³¹⁸ Rex W. Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities In Northeastern Texas, 1803-1845* (unpublished Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, June, 1937), 105.

³¹⁹ Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., *Removal Of The Choctaw Indians* (Knoxville, 1960), 63-68. Andrew Jackson personally negotiated the Treaty. Pushmataha and Puckshunibbe were the principal chiefs then. "None of the . . . negotiators knew exactly what lands were being exchanged," said DeRosier (65). The Choctaw ceded 5,000,000 acres for over 13,000,000 in Arkansas and the future Indian Territory. Pushmataha disagreed with the exchange, knowing the inferiority of the western land to the tribal possession in Mississippi. Reality, though, told him Jackson was not exaggerating the threat that was posed by the growing white multitudes. Therefore, the Choctaw signed the Treaty on October 10, 1820.

³²⁰ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 385.

³²¹ George W. Wright, *Visit Through Texas, 1817* (George Wright's *Memoirs*), unpublished account of life in or near Pecan Point from 1817 through late 1830's, 5.

³²³ Grant Foreman, *Indians and Pioneers* (Norman, Oklahoma; 1936), 145-147.

³²⁴ Thomas Nuttall, *Travels Into Arkansas* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1966), 152.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 145. DeRosier, *Removal Of Choctaw*, 49.

³²⁷ Nuttall, *Travels*, 154.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 156.

³³⁰ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 147.

³³¹ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 6.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ DeRosier, *Removal*, 80. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun met with Chief Pushmataha and a delegation of 12 in Washington, D.C. during November of 1824, through January 1825. After much negotiation, and drinking, on January

7

Indians, Soldiers Cloud Last Years

The cool night air was warmed by the flames now rising from the log structure that had served for over seven years as the Miller County Court House.³⁹⁹ More importantly, it was Claiborne Wright's home. All he could do was sit on his horse and watch, half-approvingly, as his friends in Northern Miller County burned the house he constructed in 1821.

Memories flashed through his mind. He built this home just after Betty died giving birth to their son, Alex, now eight. By this night of November 5, 1828, all hope was gone of convincing the United States government that this land north of the Red River was properly surveyed, settled, pre-empted property of many

20, 1825, the Treaty was signed. In exchange for several concessions, the Choctaw agreed, after surveying was to be completed, to evacuate most of the Arkansas Territorial lands. The negotiations were tragic, even though the Nation gained many favors, because Pushmataha died of the croup on New Year's Eve, 1824, at the age of 60. He was given a military funeral and buried in Washington's Congressional Cemetery.

³³⁴ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 797.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

³³⁶ This is what a historical marker east of Kiamatica says. In actuality, that is the census figure Claiborne Wright gave in 1825 for the western portion of Miller County, which was "ceded to the Choctaw Nation. . . at Washington City. . . in 1825" See Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XX, 92. He listed also the numbers of acres in cultivation as 6,000 and noted again that "It is also within my acquaintance and knowledge that a considerable quantity of the public lands of the United States, in the Southwestwardly part of said county [Miller], near the Red River, and but a few miles below Kiamiche, has been surveyed into sections at least five or six [or more] years ago." He attested to this on July 10, 1825.

³³⁷ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 797.

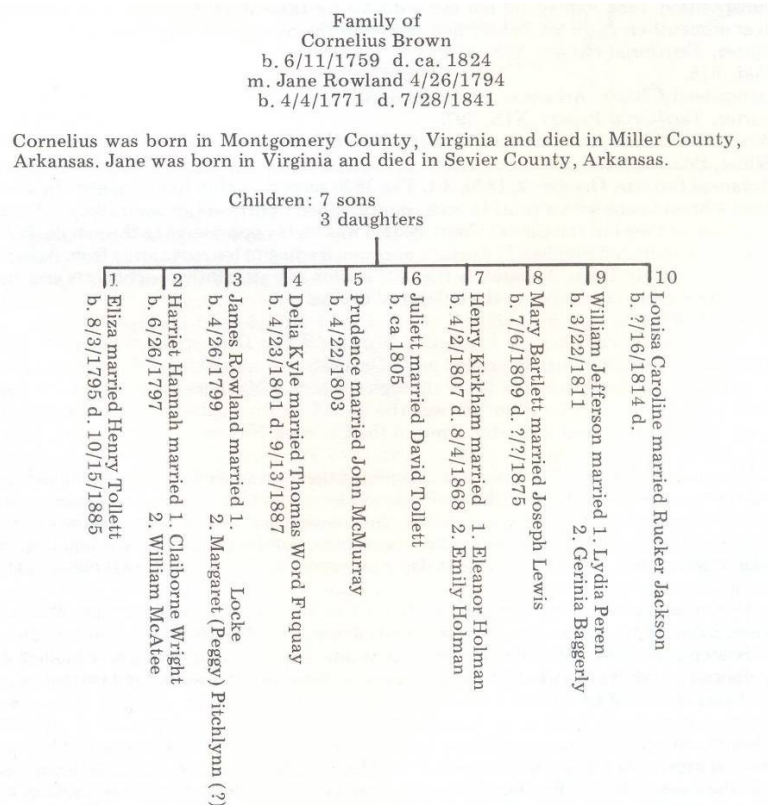
³³⁸ *Steely Papers*, Winfred H. Toilet File, Letter dated October 22, 1981. "Cornelius B. lived near Doakesville, Okla., not far from you [in Paris] . . ." Cornelius Brown's sister, Margaret, married John Tollett about 1784. Their son, David, married Brown's daughter, Juliett. Eliza Brown, another daughter, married Henry Tollett.

³³⁹ According to *Mary Vivian Daniel Papers*, Genealogical Notes, 15, Chester Ashley was the first born from Harriet. However, the Arkansas 1850 Census for Sevier County has Ashley as 22 years old and living with John and Mary Hart. This would have him born second, in 1828. Verification comes from his descendants. See *Steely Papers*, Lucile Ledbetter File. The birth date of John Wright is not known, nor are any of his descendants known to the author of *Six Months From Tennessee* at time of publication.

³⁴⁰ Jane Rowland Brown, daughter of James and Margaret Rowland of Botetourt County, Virginia, and Claiborne would bury Cornelius, her husband, only a year later. Hempstead County, Arkansas, *Mortgage and Deeds Book B*, 14. Harriet may have been married before. Many have given her the name of "House." Her brother, Henry Kirkham Brown, would later marry two of James Holman's daughters, Eleanor and Emily. George Wright would marry their sister, Matilda. The families were close, it would seem by the evidence.

Anglo-American families. Many had exited earlier, most would now move on. Only the foolish would remain. Nearby, Shawneetown would drop into obscurity in only a few years.⁴⁰⁰ The Clear Creek settlers were almost all gone. Jonesborough would now be the center of activity for a few more years until Clarksville grew. Then, eventually Jonesborough too would drop from the map.

Angry at the actions of the government they thought would save them from the depredations of the Indian onslaught, the settlers took their vengeance out toward Washington City (District of Columbia) by torching the Clear Creek house, burning public records, benches, files and all traces of county government back to 1821. Claiborne thought his son, Travis, was going to remove the



³⁴¹ *Arkansas Gazette*, September 1, 1821, 3:2.

³⁴² Margaret Ross, *Arkansas Gazette, The Early Years, 1819-1866* (Little Rock, 1969), 36.

³⁴³ Ross, *Pulaski County Historical Review*, Vol. I, No. I, 11.

³⁴⁴ Pulaski County, Arkansas, *Land Deed Book Number 1*, County Clerk's Office. A glance at the transactions suggest some of these men did find their monetary success in Little Rock.

³⁴⁵ Ross, *Arkansas Gazette*, Early Years, 40 & 89.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁴⁸ After a conversation with Margaret Ross, her assumption that the Cunningham's house would be the first place Wright and Ashley would meet in Little Rock was adopted into this account. The pair had worked together in the 1820 August Term of the Common Pleas Court in Hempstead County. Ashley was an attorney for Bob Musick, who was again in trouble for selling Indians whiskey! *Steely Papers*, Southwestern Arkansas Research File, 15. Hempstead

records from the house before the "ceremony," but the fire was started early and Travis was too late.⁴⁰¹ The new Courthouse at Gabriel N. Martin's place on the Red River, near where now is Bason's Mill Creek, Red River County, Texas, would have to operate without previously recorded transactions.⁴⁰² It would cause numerous problems, but the irate citizens did not care about the future.

Claiborne felt the frustration possibly most of all, even though much of his family's land ownership was now near the mouth of the Kiamichi River in Texas.⁴⁰³ He even had a home there where he, Harriet, and their two sons, John and Ashley (born earlier in 1828), along with Alex and Marley, had settled earlier in the Fall. It would be closer to Travis and George, who lived in Jonesborough, after returning from an attempt to attend school in

County, Arkansas, *Order Book A*, June 28, 1818-March, 1822.

³⁴⁹ Ross, *Arkansas Gazette, Early Years*, 250. On April 23, 1848, Ashley left the Senate Chamber saying he felt chilly and slightly ill. He became violently ill with a fever later. Not becoming too concerned because her husband frequently was delirious during moments of indisposition, Mrs. Ashley did not call a doctor for three days. He died of quinsy (and a liver ailment) on April 29. Ashley had served in the Senate for only four years.

³⁵⁰ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 811.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 818.

³⁵² Hempstead County, Arkansas, *Order Book A*, 14.

³⁵³ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 797.

³⁵⁴ White, *Politics*, 36 and *Arkansas Gazette*, November 1, 1821, 1:1.

³⁵⁵ White, *Politics*, 36.

³⁵⁶ *Arkansas Gazette*, October 2, 1820, 3:4. The 1820 second session had changed the circuit court system to one with a court in each county, called Courts of Common Pleas. They did this because they felt the Circuit Court system was highly oppressive to the people. By the way, this eliminated Stephen F. Austin's position, leading to his move away from Arkansas and eventually to Texas. Apparently the 1821 session was attempting to cut costs and make the system more conducive to the delegates' desires.

³⁵⁷ White, *Politics*, 37.

³⁵⁸ W. David Baird, *The Quapaw Indians: A History Of The Downstream People* (Norman, 1980), 65. In 1818, the Quapaws ceded to the United States almost two million acres of land stretching from the Mississippi River through Arkansas, Oklahoma and part of the Texas Panhandle. The northern boundary was the Canadian River, the southern was the Red River. Most of this land was later given to the Choctaw Nation.

In November, 1824, the "Downstream" people, as they were called, reluctantly ceded their remaining acreage southeast of Little Rock and were told that they were to "merge itself with the Caddos". By August of 1825 they moved, but this proved unsatisfactory to both the Caddos and the Quapaws. After six months, one-fourth of the tribe had left their villages 30 miles northwest of present day Shreveport and returned to Arkansas.

By 1830 most had removed from the Red River area and joined their kin back in Arkansas. Still hassled by the government and white residents, 300 returned to the Caddo Country. In September of 1834, Wharton Rector, agent in charge of immigration, enrolled 176 Quapaws to trek west. After 30 days he arrived with 161 Indians. They settled in the northeast corner of Oklahoma.

However, after villages were established, it was ascertained they were in the wrong location! One last move was made--to the west of the Missouri state line and north of the Senecas and Shawnees. The band in Texas was eventually forced to leave, moving into Choctaw lands, where they were forced out and became wanderers again. By 1842, 250 Quapaws were located near Holdenville, Oklahoma, and gradually ventured out, dispersing west.

One stroke of luck hit the tribe that remained on the reservation--many made fortunes leasing the land for lead and zinc mines!

Louisville, Kentucky.⁴⁰⁴ William popped in now and then to visit the area, spending most of his time on the Red River between Jonesborough and Washington, Arkansas.⁴⁰⁵

So, life shouldn't be too bad for Claiborne Wright. After all, he was no longer saddled with the duties of sheriff, which had become such a headache in the last year of his term of office, which ended December 31, 1827. He turned over the duties to his nephew and close companion, Postmaster John H. Fowler.⁴⁰⁶ A large majority of the 2,500 population, as Claiborne reported on July 10, 1825, had simply refused to pay taxes in Western Miller County and moved on south. In some instances, Claiborne reported they had exited when the case wasn't such.⁴⁰⁷ He realized the futility of collecting some of the taxes. Later, his sons, William and Travis, and his wife Harriet, would go through a long court proceeding to clear the taxes he owed the Arkansas government, but were never collected.⁴⁰⁸

A LIST OF DELINQUENTS
For County Taxes in the county of Miller, Territory
of Arkansas, for the year 1825.

Atkinson, Joseph	removed	\$.50	Sharp, James A.	"	\$.50
Anderson, Walter	"	1.73¾	Suengrove, Jackameah	"	.50
Crafton, John	"	.63¾	Suelgrove, Benjamin	"	.56¾
Grayham, William	"	.50¾	Smith, Gabriel	"	.68¾
Herrel, Joel	"	1.50	Scretchfield, Flemon	"	1.00
Hudgen, (Ambrose)	"	8.75	Strickland, Amos	"	.95
Horrell, Timothy	"	1.62½	Stiles, John	"	1.38¾
Herrell, Lydah	"	4.16¾	Strickland, David	"	.87½
Hudson, John	"	.66	Strickland, James	"	1.23
Hanks, Orator (Horatio)	"	.50	Strickland, Samuel	"	.50
Little, Silas	"	.25	Slover, John	"	.75
Langford, Thomas	"	.50	Slover, Robert	"	.56¾
Lane, Alford	"	.25	Thomson, Rachel	"	.56¾
Mooss, Nereah	"	.85	Welch, Dankel	insolvent	.75
Madglen, William	"	.50	Wyat, Joseph	removed	1.00
Magary, Thomas	"	.31¾	Warrington, John P.	"	.50
Pendergrass, Merry	insolvent	1.10	Willis, Arther	"	.50
Chandler, Jacob	removed	2.07½			
Curethers, John	"	.50			\$59.40½
Clark, Samuel	"	.25			
Crownover, John	"	1.56¾			
Crownover, Benjamin	"	1.13	I, Clayborn Wright, Sheriff of Miller		
Dooly, George	"	3.68¾	county, do certify the foregoing		
Martin, Neal (Cornelius)	"	3.26¾	to be a true list of the delinquents		
McRelvy, Hugh	"	1.00	of said county, for the year 1825.		
Murphy, Enos	"	1.00			
Mall, John W.	"	1.18¾	CLAYBORN WRIGHT, Sheriff		
Nedaver, Jacob	"	2.31¾	Miller County, April 29,		
Nedaver, George	"	.70	1826.		
Polk, Benjamin	"	1.05			
Pelham, William	"	.68¾			
Polk, Taylor, sen.	"	1.50			
Ross, William	"	.25			

From *Arkansas Gazette*, May 30, 1826, 3:5.

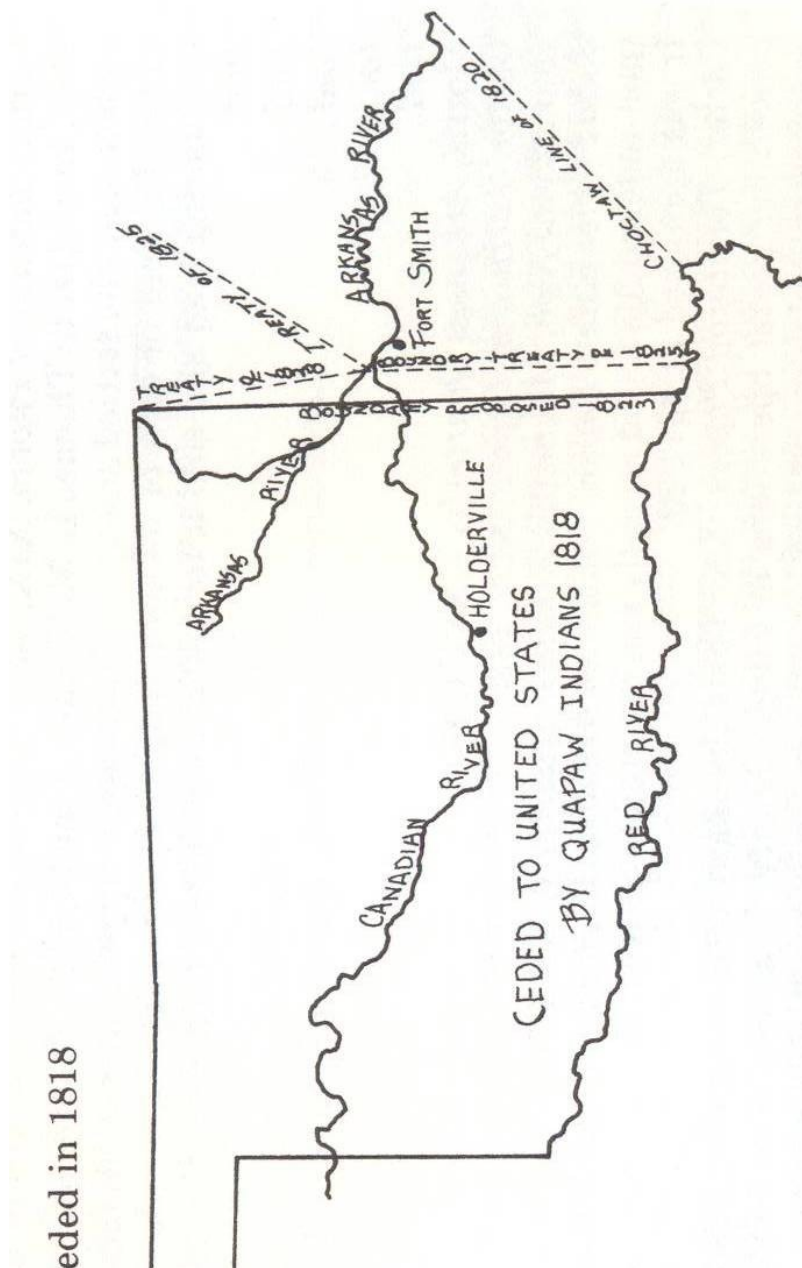
Fowler lasted in the sheriff's position until July 27, 1829, just a little past nineteen months. J.G.W. Pierson, who had been the county coroner in 1826 and surveyor in 1828, helped Fowler corral those arsonists on November 5, 1828 for burning the Courthouse.⁴⁰⁹ There was never any recorded court action, however.

The only evidence suggesting that there was a search for those who started the fire was in a letter sent by Postmaster General John McLean to George F. Lawton, County Clerk and now Postmaster for Miller County. In it, McLean said, in response to the letter Lawton sent reporting the fire, that "I hope the culprit [who started the fire] will be detected."⁴¹⁰ It would be highly probable that Lawton knew exactly who organized the incident,

but he had to live among them--and perhaps even believed in their action. Lawton, whose son would later marry Claiborne's granddaughter, Louisiana Martin Hemingway, replaced Fowler as postmaster in October of 1828, only one month before the Courthouse conflagration.⁴¹¹

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Claiborne could do nothing to help the night of the fire, either. So, as he sat there on his old horse he thought back over the past decade in Miller County. The farming area could have



been so much more had not the government decided to give the lands they had purchased originally, in 1818, from the Quapaws, to the Choctaws. For six years the Miller County residents fought the decisions related to the 1820 Treaty of Doak's Stand and the 1825 Treaty of Washington, but lost. The only reason his house was still the Courthouse was because the General Assembly had asked that it remain the seat until the government removed inhabitants on the north side.⁴¹²

When the survey by James S. Conway was completed on December 7, 1825, the western portion of Miller County, north of the Red River, still was in Indian Territory.⁴¹³ The United States ignored the fact that the Territory of Arkansas had placed the

³⁵⁹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 797.

³⁶⁰ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 6.

³⁶¹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XX, 92-93.

³⁶² Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 7.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ Magnaghi, *Arkansas Quarterly*, XXXVII, 169. Actually, all that is printed is that he left Baltimore and traveled to New Orleans, and then to Natchitoches. Magnaghi says, by way of telephone interview, that he does not know where this John Fowler originated. In fact, he was not aware there were two men by the same name in the Red River area.

³⁶⁴ Russell M. Magnaghi, "Sulphur Fork Factory, 1817 -1822," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (1978), 167.

³⁶⁵ Wayne Morris, "Traders and Factories On The Arkansas Frontier, 1805-1822," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (1969), 46.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁶⁹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 70-71. Research has not turned up the Chiefs name even though he was in charge of 10-12 tribes of Caddo. In the letter to John Jamison, Fowler says, "He is the Chief of Ten tribes, Eight of whom live beyond the Sabine, in all he might raise five hundred Warriors---."

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 134. Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "William Bradford," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XIII, 349. She says it was probably Robert L. Coomb of Georgia, who served in the Army from 1813-1821, when he was honorably discharged (She quotes Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register*, United States Army, Washington, 1903, I, 325). Although George Wright, in *Visit Through Texas*, 5, remembers Coomb(s) in 1821, apparently he is off by a couple of years. To summarize, on May 16, 1819, William Bradford left Fort Smith to carry out the orders to remove white residents from the territory belonging to the Osage Indians. His movement was mainly north of Coomb, but he did come as far south as the Pecan Point area. Along the trip with Bradford, which was previous to the one Coomb took, was Thomas Nuttall. Foreman, *Arkansas Quarterly*, XIII, 346. Bradford later wrote in the *Arkansas Gazette*, March 8, 1825,3:2, that "Immediately after many of those who had removed under the order of myself and Capt. Coons (sic) [they] re-occupied the ground from which they had been removed. . ." Colonel Mathew Arbuckle, in the autumn of 1823, removed all the intruders [in the northern area] and the people settled in the Counties of Miller and Crawford. Foreman, *Arkansas Quarterly*, XIII, 349.

³⁷¹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 76.

³⁷² *Ibid.* In a letter to Thomas L. McKenney, June 14, 1819, Fowler reports that a "Mr. Music, a white man who settled among the Delaware, forty miles above this factory, got permission to plant a field of corn of his own, but, once entrenched, drove the Delaware from the neighboring land and sold it for \$900." See Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 73-74.

county seat at Claiborne's house, recognizing then that the area was a part of the Territorial government. That was when the population was at about 2,500. Quickly, by August 23, 1827, it plummeted to only 75.⁴¹⁴ Even though the settlers were given a year of grace, most had left the area for places south of Texas.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ Morris, *Arkansas Quarterly*, XXVIII, 48.

³⁷⁹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 122.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 254n. Also, Magnaghi, *Arkansas Quarterly*, XXXVIII, 169.

³⁸¹ *John Fowler Estate Papers*, Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, Washington, Arkansas (non-indexed file found recently [1980] and donated to SARA). His property totaled only \$278.41. It was appraised at \$311.70.

³⁸² Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XX. There are many letters between Fowler and authorities concerning postal operations in Miller County. The fact that Fowler took the job of postmaster, which would find his office in Claiborne Wright's house, might suggest that he had his own home nearby. Otherwise, there is no evidence of where J.H. Fowler lived pre-1830. Also, George H. Shirk, "First Post Offices Within The Boundaries Of Oklahoma," *Chronicles Of Okla.*, XXVI, (1948-49), 216.

³⁸³ *Arkansas Gazette*, December 13, 1825, 3:2.

³⁸⁴ Assumption. There is little or no knowledge of William Fowler Wright's movement. He was later a magistrate in Miller County, 1829 and 1831. See Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 819. He and Harriet were co-executors of Claiborne's estate on July 26, 1830. See *George Travis Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies (*Steely Papers* file, 4). However, he died on January 6, 1833 at the age of 30. At his death he owed a debt to Ben R. Milam for \$450 for towing 800 bushels of corn from Lost Prairie to Jonesborough, implying he may have been working on the River as Travis later did, or had a store in Jonesborough. Administrators of his estate were Travis G. Wright, Ben R. Milam and J.H. Johnstone. *George Travis Wright Papers*, 13.

³⁸⁵ White, *Politics*, 33 & 37.

³⁸⁶ *Arkansas Gazette*, September 3, 1822, 3:4. A letter from MISSISSIPUS says, "I know Major Bradford only from character, and the world says of him, that he is an honest, a very honest man." A short resume of Bradford: He was born in Virginia. While serving as captain in Kentucky's Seventeenth Infantry in March 1812, a bomb fell into the fort he was occupying. While the fuse burned, he picked it up and threw it among the enemy, saving many of his soldiers. He had represented Muhlenberg County in the Kentucky Legislature in 1801, 1803, 1810 and 1811. In 1814, he was promoted to major in the Twenty-first Infantry. In 1817, Major Stephen H. Long selected the site for Fort Smith, Arkansas and Bradford was put in charge. On November 10, 1818, he was made permanent major. Although he was small and controversial, one observer wrote, the Major was ". . . stern looking, an excellent disciplinarian and a gallant officer." Colonel Mathew Arbuckle replaced Bradford in February, 1822, and the Major was transferred to Natchitoches, Fort Selden, reporting to Lt. Col. Zachary Taylor. Harry S. Ashmore, *Arkansas, A Centennial History* (New York, 1978), 30. The transfer and a celebrated lawsuit he was a part of seemed to slow down his desire for the Army life. After he lost to Henry Conway by 300 votes in 1823, he only spent one more year in the military before resigning. On May 1, 1824, he and his wife, Francis, moved to near

Miller County Census, 1827. From *Arkansas Gazette*, August 28, 1827, 3:1.

Townships	White Persons					Colored Persons					Total
	Males			Females		Free		Slaves			
	Over 45	14-45	Under 14	Over 14	Under 14	Males	Females	Over 45	16-45	10-16	
Pecan	12	50	43	36	31	0	0	3	16	2	193
Washington	11	33	35	29	24	0	0	3	10	7	152
Jefferson	5	17	22	14	29	0	0	1	1	0	89
Clay	11	38	70	49	42	0	1	1	15	2	229
Sevier	13	14	22	19	20						88

Cantonment Towson, where Bradford would become the post sutler. A wound he had received at Fort Meigs in the Territory of Michigan, back in 1813, still bothered him. Despite the discomfort, he accepted the office of commander of the Arkansas Militia and the commission as brigadier-general. However, he lived only until October 20, 1826, when he died at the age of 55 after a bout with yellow fever following a trip to Fort Smith. See Foreman, *Arkansas Quarterly*, XIII, 341-351.

³⁸⁷ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 137.

³⁸⁸ *Arkansas Gazette*, October 11, 1825, 3:1.

³⁸⁹ Pulaski County, *Arkansas Deed Book D*, 238.

³⁹⁰ White, *Politics*, 46 and 55. In 1823, Miller County had been represented by David Clark (who defeated Elijah Carter) in the Legislative Council, and by Thomas Polk (defeated Joshua Ewing) in the House.

³⁹¹ *Arkansas Gazette*, November 8, 1825, 1:1.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, It was called "An Act To Punish The Crime Of Fornication."

³⁹³ White, *Politics*, 56.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

³⁹⁶ *Dawson Papers*, (Washington, Arkansas, Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives), see map file. The four were: 1820, Treaty of Doak's Stand; 1823, proposed by Congress; 1824, fixed by Congress; and 1825, Treaty of Washington (present boundary of Oklahoma and Arkansas).

³⁹⁷ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 159. Foreman calls him Major John P. Pitchlynn. This adds spice to the story that perhaps the pair, Pitchlynn and Claiborne Wright, did meet in the Winter of 1825. There are no facts to prove this but surely, if Pitchlynn were in the area, the almost legendary Sheriff and the well-respected interpreter talked over the aspects of the Treaty and the possibilities.

³⁹⁸ W. David Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn, Chief Of The Choctaws* (Norman, 1972), 51. James drops from historical sight and is dead by 1834 (See Lowndes County, Mississippi, *Estate No. 37, Box 147, File No.6*, Chancery Clerk Office. John Pitchlynn is made guardian to sons of James--Alexander and Ebenezer); Mary (Mrs. Sam Garland), who had emigrated earlier, but came back to Mississippi, went back to Indian Territory in 1836; Eliza (Mrs. William Riley Harris), traveled to near Eagletown in 1837, along with Mrs. John Pitchlynn and the Major's two younger daughters, Betsey and Kiziah; and finally, Rhoda (Mrs. Calvin Hickman Howell) and her family joined the clan later in 1837, leaving Plymouth, the town Dr. Howell founded. Thomas was apparently already in the Territory preparing, along with Peter Perkins Pitchlynn, for the arrival of the family members. Peter had tried living on the Arkansas River, but found it unpredictable and sought lands in southeast Oklahoma.

Chapter 7

³⁹⁹ *Arkansas Gazette*, July 22, 1820, 1:1. Rex W. Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities In Northeast Texas, 1803-1845* (unpublished Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, June, 1937), 102-104. The first meeting at his home was on July 23, 1821. It was again chosen as the site of the county seat in 1825, 1827 and

Actually, Claiborne remembered, Indians had begun to filter into the Red River Valley from Mississippi and other points east and northeast before and just after the Treaty of 1820. About 60 Choctaws settled down at Pecan Point in 1822, on the south side of the River.

"These Choctaws, who were outlaws from their own tribe east of the Mississippi, acted also as intermediaries in the traffic of stolen horses which was carried on by white men between the region of the Arkansas and Nacogdoches."⁴¹⁵

1828. See *Gazette*, December 13, 1825, 1:2; December 25, 1827, 1:1; and November 11, 1828, 1:2.

⁴⁰⁰ *Steely Papers*, Louis H. Coleman file. Coleman, an Idabel, Oklahoma historian, says Dr. Robert Loftin now owns the property (1982) where it is estimated Shawneetown was located. There are no remains of the town left.

⁴⁰¹ When this book first was published, it was only family lore that Travis Wright did get the records. Fragments do exist and arise frequently from various relatives. However, the bulk of the records were lost. Those from Miller County post 1828 are now in the *George Travis Wright Papers*, Barker Archives, University of Texas, Austin, Texas. After publication, many Miller County records post 1828 were found in the Travis Wright plantation house. Most can be viewed at the Texas A&M-Commerce Gee Library Archives in the *Steely Collection*.

⁴⁰² Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 171. The settlers had to publish their land transfers in the *Gazette* or any other Territorial Newspaper for a couple of months before official transactions were made after the fire.

⁴⁰³ Since Ruth Rees Milligan, a great-grand-daughter of Claiborne, says she once saw a Spanish Land Grant paper, it is assumed that the pioneer had one south of the River. Perhaps he had the land George Wright later lived on. *Steely Papers*, Milligan file.

⁴⁰⁵ George Travis Wright Papers, lone Lewis Copies (*Steely Papers*), 13.

⁴⁰⁶ Clarence E. Carter (ed), *Territorial Papers Of The United States, Territory Of Arkansas*, XIX (Washington, 1940), 797. *American State Papers*, Post Office Department, 180. Fowler was the first postmaster. His activities were carried on in Claiborne's house as well as his duties as the agent for the *Arkansas Gazette*. See issue of December 23, 1823, 2:1.

⁴⁰⁴ *Tillson-Mary Vivian Daniel (MVD) Papers*, Book No.3, 15. The two were sent to live with William Wright, Claiborne's father, and James, his brother, in Louisville prior to 1827. William died in 1827 or 1828. Travis and George only stayed one session. They finished their rough educations studying under "teachers" in Jonesborough.

⁴⁰⁷ *Arkansas Gazette*, July 24, 1827, 3:5. Also, Rex W. Strickland, "Miller County, Arkansas Territory: The Frontier That Men Forgot," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, XIX (March, 1941), 41 & 53.

⁴⁰⁸ *George T. Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies, 8-9. Travis Wright had to swear that he remembered the amount of taxes Claiborne never paid to the government after he collected them as part of his sheriff's duties. The argument over the amount was pursued for several years. See also, *Steely Papers*, Edgar Wright file, Edgar Wright, Jr., a great-great-grandson of Claiborne, said it was common to put down "removed" when the sheriff could not collect.

⁴⁰⁹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 797. Also, according to an order dated August 14, 1828, and executed October 13, 1828, Fowler was sheriff at that time. See *Steely Papers*, Fowler files, United States vs. Lewis B. Dayton (request to take Dayton into custody).

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XX, 818. McLean also said the loss of postal money was the postmaster's responsibility.

⁴¹¹ *Steely Papers*, Genealogical Charts and Henrietta Wright file.

One of the men instigating and participating in the horse running activities was Nicholas Trammell, a grandson of Phillip Trammell, Claiborne's former partner in Shawneetown, Illinois.⁴¹⁶ But that is an entirely different story! The illegal activities aroused the Osage Indians, who retaliated against everyone, Choctaw and white alike.⁴¹⁷

But the negotiations in Washington City with the Choctaw Nation, and the resulting problems, coupled with the additional troublesome events with Indians in the area, caused most western Arkansas settlers to move on south to join up with Stephen F. Austin's colony or enter into other land agreements away from the Northeast Texas area. Some, like Henry Stout, went no farther than Wood County to find relief.⁴¹⁸

Then, as George Wright remembers:

" . . . it [the movement south] left a small body of people on this side of the river [south] perfectly exposed to the constant inroads of the indians as the north side of the River was an indian country."⁴¹⁹

His writings bitterly state that the Indians were given

⁴¹² *Arkansas Gazette*, December 13, 1825, 1:2 and Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 139. Also, *Gazette*, December 25, 1827, 1:1.

⁴¹³ *Arkansas Gazette*, December 20, 1825, 3:1.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, August 28, 1827, 3:1.

⁴¹⁵ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 148.

⁴¹⁶ *Dawson Papers* (Washington, Arkansas, Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, unpublished paper on Trammell family), 25. _____, "History Of Gallatin County," *Illinois Historical Society Publications*, XIV, 342. "Trammell. . . hired expert men to help produce salt from the government salines. Anthony Hart, a friend of Nicholas Trammell, Sr., who had operated the salt licks at Nashville since 1790, came to his assistance, as did Claiborne Wright from the Duck River settlement."

⁴¹⁷ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 149.

⁴¹⁸ A.W. Neville, *History Of Lamar County* (Paris, 1937), 14 & 235. Henry Stout was an early Red River settler, coming to the area between 1819-1823. He was a part of the group of 70-80 volunteers that assembled on May 4, 1841, in Fannin County to avenge the Comanche murders of the Ripley family. John B. Denton was killed when this group fought at Village Creek. Stout had previously, according to Dr. Herman F. Benthul (ed.), *Wood County History, 1850-1900* (Quitman, 1976), 1, hunted with such men as David Crockett and even mapped him a way to travel to the Alamo. Stout helped organize Wood County in 1850. George Wright tells an interesting story about Stout on page 13 & 14 of *Visit Through Texas, 1817* (George Wright *Memoirs*), unpublished account of life in or near Pecan Point from 1817 through the late 1830's. In 1827 a group of citizens had trailed Indians who had killed a man named (Isaac?) Murphy in the Mill Creek settlement, about 20 miles from Pecan Point, when they caught up with the band near Choctaw Bayou. See *Steely Collection*, Murphy and Crouch Files, Gee Library. Captain Charles Burkham only had a contingent of 11 boys and two men to fight about 500 warriors. The group decided to return, but were starved from the three day's travel. "The game was plenty but indians so much more plenty that it was deemed [imprudent] to shoot," commented George.

Finally, it seemed safe to pursue a buffalo. " . . . they applied both whip and spurs for about two miles and were getting near the bull when a keen crack of a rifle was heard just before them. . . to their utter astonishment one of the men had felt the chase so strong that he broke orders and took it a foot and has passed the horses and killed the buffalo! When we came up it was an old friend, Captain Henry Stout. . ."

⁴¹⁹ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 7.

protection now, but the whites were treated as having no rights to be in that section. And, in reality, they did not have a legal right to hunt, travel or settle north of the Red River.⁴²⁰ The problem was, there was no substantial assistance from Cantonment Towson for protection and never really had been. Nor was there to be enough population south of the River to keep the Indians from pillaging the Texas inhabitants, who were still an entity of the Territory of Arkansas.

The fear of the Indians and the lack of response by the government of the United States led some men, veteran settlers like Nathaniel Robbins and Charles Burkham, and newcomer Dr. Lewis B. Dayton, to openly appeal for help from Jose Antonio Saucedo, political Chief of the Department of the Province of Texas.⁴²¹

On June 12, 1827, Burkham addressed the inhabitants of Lost Prairie, those living 20 miles east of Pecan Point near Spanish Bluffs:

"I have the pleasure to inform you, that I have completed my business with the Mexican government, to go against any hostile Indians in the Government [Mexico]"⁴²²

Burkham, who had been in the Valley since at least 1816, told the settlers that the Mexican government would allow a "handsome" compensation for their services in assisting the removal of the culprits.

"Any man or men wishing to engage in the service, will be thankfully received, at any place, above the Spanish Bluffs, on the south side of Red River, as it is unknown where the boundary line between the two governments will fall, and I do not wish to get in any difficulty whatever."⁴²³

He said the group would rendezvous at Pecan Point July 20, elect officers, and march on the Pawnees and, or the Comanches, the two who were causing the most problems at the time. Saucedo not only approved of the measure, but also had written on April 19, 1827 to Robbins and Dr. Dayton that certain steps were necessary to expediently establish a municipality of the Mexican Province of Texas at Pecan Point.⁴²⁴

⁴²⁰ "Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XX, 30-31. Hunting west of the "Kiamishy," according to Major Alexander Cummings in a letter to Samuel C. Roane, U.S. District Attorney, Little Rock, had been forbidden since 1820, but was difficult to stop. See also letter to General Atkinson.

⁴²¹ *Arkansas Gazette*, November 6, 1827, 4:1. Rex W. Strickland, *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, XIX, No.1, 52-53. He says that Dayton "remains an enigmatical figure. He was a citizen of Miller County earlier, but in the winter of 1825-26 emigrated to south Texas where he made his home with William Robbins, a kinsman to Nathaniel. In 1827 he was at San Felipe and was tarred and feathered for his opposition to Stephen F. Austin in September of that year." He is barely mentioned in the *Handbook of Texas* "On the whole, he seems to have been a constant agitator whose presence was less to be desired than his absence," concluded Strickland. See footnote 11.

⁴²² Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 38. Also, *Arkansas Gazette*, November 6, 1827, 4:2. This particular "Lost Prairie" was located two miles above the Spanish Bluffs in present Bowie County. *George T. Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies (*Steely Papers*), 40.

⁴²³ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 159.

⁴²⁴ *Arkansas Gazette*, November 6, 1827, 4:2.

This did not go over too well with most of the settlers on this frontier. They began to realize that the land claims south of the Red River were on just as precarious foundations as were the ones they once had to the north.⁴²⁵ While a few listed with the Mexican proponents, Claiborne, George Wetmore, J.G.W. Pierson, James S. Hanks, William Slingland, George F. Lawton and a host of others would appeal to Governor George Izard of Arkansas early the next year that the Mexican government had given the Indians, particularly the Shawnees, permission to roam the land near Pecan Point.⁴²⁶

Therefore, two different stories were coming from Miller County. Izard had already ordered Major Alexander Cummings, commandant of the "helpless" Cantonment Towson, to investigate the actions of Robbins, Dayton and Burkham.⁴²⁷ Cummings, in turn, ordered a young officer, Lieutenant William S. Colquhoun, to the community at Pecan Point to verify and report back.

Colquhoun reported that Robbins assured him that nothing would be done on behalf of the settlers until the boundary lines had been drawn between the two countries.⁴²⁸ But, Robbins was firmly--and later proven right--convinced that the area would be under Mexican control once the survey revealed the correct line. Living in uncertainty, the settlers wanted simply a solid title to their lands, no matter in which country they resided.

Before leaving, Colquhoun told Burkham that if he did raise a body of men, and did attack the Indians, that his group would be treated as public enemies. This warning was joined by another one that was posted with Aaron Hanscom at Pecan Point, saying there was not an authority to set up a provisional government south of the river in Miller County.⁴²⁹ Both would have been difficult to enforce had the settlers chosen to defy Cantonment Towson. The garrison there relied heavily upon the Anglo militia in the area to support their slim force, since the regular army attachment was very small, sometimes numbering as few as a dozen.⁴³⁰

Luckily for the army, no action was needed. Burkham's call for a force was coldly rejected.⁴³¹ There was strong dissatisfaction among the Miller County citizens with the soldiers, as John H. Fowler pointed out in the General Assembly during the Fall of 1827.⁴³² Most citizens were more inclined to await the survey and obey the United States government. The wait would be 10 more years before Pecan Point and Jonesborough residents would be absolutely certain under which government they fell.

But Fowler insisted in Little Rock that the business by Burkham, Robbins, Dayton and Saucedo be investigated and reports to the governor be released. He introduced on October 5 a resolution to "study the measures to secure the southwestern frontier and to inquire into the actions by a party of men who are protected by the Mexican government."⁴³³ He persisted on October 11 by resolving that "the governor furnish the General Assembly with any information he has relative to actions on the southwestern frontier."⁴³⁴ On the next day, Governor Izard met his request. Fowler submitted the information to the Select Committee, of which he was a member.⁴³⁵

That was the last mention of the resolution and efforts by Fowler. He sat occasionally in the chairman's chair while the Legislative Council acted on several other motions and matters of

interest to Miller County, especially those having to do with the Choctaw land subject. Finally, on October 30, 1827, Fowler moved to introduce an "Act to locate the seat of justice of Miller County," a final approach to approving and accepting the idea that they must move south of the Red River very soon.⁴³⁶

This was the act that said the county seat would remain at the house of Claiborne Wright until removal.

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Most of those friends of Fowler and Wright still clung to hope that the Arkansas Territorial government would help settle the Indian problems. The *Petition to Governor Izard by Citizens of Miller Co un ty*, dated March 20, 1828, said in part:

" . . . those living in the Civil and Military jurisdiction of the United States humbly sheweth, that we are and for some time past been very much annoyed by the Indians, particularly the Shawanees, settling among us, building their huts contiguous to our corn Cribs and fields, pilfering from houses and Corn-cribs, Killing Hogs, Driving their Stocks of Horses and Cattle among us, Cutting Down Timber, etc. and all done under the authority of his Excellency Don Jose Antonio Saucedo of the Department of Texas.

"⁴³⁷

The settlers pointed out the Shawnees, despite what Saucedo had said while negotiating with Burkham, Dayton and Robbins, simultaneously had been given Mexican permission, on March 20, 1827, to settle in Pecan Point!⁴³⁸

The *Petition* continued to appeal for Territorial assistance:

"-Your petitioners believing it to be within the power of the Executive of this Territory to cause the removal of the aforesaid Indians, humbly solicit the Interference of His Excellency--in the behalf of this section of the country. Otherwise we see no prospect but of being oblidge to abandon our homes and fields which most of us have cultivated from Ten to 12 years or be oblidge to come to an open rupture with them as they frequently have threatened to drive us off if not pleased with their conduct.

"⁴³⁹

Forty-four Pecan Point area residents signed the Petition. In addition, the March term of the Grand Jury of Miller County presented a statement saying that the facts presented by the Petition were true. It was signed by George C. Wetmore, John Robbins, Thomas Boatright, James T. (J.?) Ward, Sr., Willis McCann, James Clark, John Teal, Pharah Kitchens, John Dunlop, Thomas hunpres (Humpries), Levi Davis, Andrew Dolahide (Dolarhide), H. McHanks, Ben Patton and a man named William McAtee, a good friend with Claiborne Wright.⁴⁴⁰ In fact, this is the first notice that McAtee was in Miller County. His arrival was undocumented. He would, in 1833, become the husband of Claiborne's widow and administrator of Claiborne's estate.

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The settlers were, more or less, shooting in the dark, asking for military help from Arkansas. But perhaps it was psychologically necessary to appeal for Territorial assistance

before resorting to actions such as Charles Burkham professed. After all, help from Cantonment Towson, since its creation in 1824, had been minimal. Actually many felt the Garrison had been a hindrance almost as often as a help. George Wright relates an incident that upset the entire western portion of Miller County in 1825:

"There was one circumstance that occurred about 1825 as well as I can Recollect. A dispute got up between the citizens of the country and a fort called fort Towson. A party of soldiers had been guilty of some misdemeanor and were arrested and carried before a magistrate for trial . . ." ⁴⁴¹

Wright was correct about the year. In the Winter of 1824-25 the animosity between the cantonment's personnel, commanded by Major Cummings, and the residents of the area reached dangerous proportions. The climax came when Cummings made an effort to close a number of whiskey stills near the post. ⁴⁴² Discipline was unstable among the 90-100 soldiers. They were mostly single men, bored and certainly longing for a better assignment. Whiskey was readily available to help pass the time.

Major Cummings ordered Samuel Brice, one of the chief dealers in the spirits, and others to close their "grogeries." ⁴⁴³ The distillers, naturally, resented and refused this interference. However, the soldiers and Cummings apparently did not complete the destruction of all the stills.

A short time after the order, Lieutenant Charles Thomas, (later the Post Quarter Master), for some reason borrowed a horse from Brice with the supposition that he might purchase him. Thomas rode the horse to the post office at Claiborne Wright's home on the Red River near Shawneetown. Along the way the horse was injured, or ridden too hard. ⁴⁴⁴ The lieutenant refused to compensate Brice for the loss of the animal. ⁴⁴⁵ This angered Brice enough to bring the matter to court in front of Judge John Bowman, justice of the peace. A jury trial followed. ⁴⁴⁶ Brice wasn't at the trial, but was represented by his agent. Lieutenant Thomas was there and was judged guilty. He was ordered to pay a sum of \$50, more than the price Brice had demanded. ⁴⁴⁷

The assessment was not paid after ten days had passed. Therefore, James Garner, constable for the court, managed to seize Thomas's own horse and lock it up in Brice's stable. ⁴⁴⁸

Several soldiers went absent without official leave from Cummings. At midnight, January 20, 1825, they rode to Judge Bowman's house to demand that the horse be released in their custody. Bowman, who was about to leave office and turn his duties over to Joshua Ewing, refused to help or to release the horse. ⁴⁴⁹ So, the soldiers took it upon themselves to forcibly attack Brice's Plantation, which was eight miles away, and recover the hidden horse. ⁴⁵⁰

Judge Bowman, in the meantime, summoned J.W.G. Pierson, a deputy sheriff working for Claiborne Wright, sheriff of Miller County. ⁴⁵¹ With a group of men they followed and arrested a band of soldiers at Brice's place. Several escaped, but a search found a Sergeant Jernigan hiding in the nearby field. He was carried back to the rest of the soldiers in custody in Brice's barn. But, the soldiers had broken their lock in the stable, had taken the

horse, and had left! Even though several soldiers made for the garrison's safety with the horse, some of the stragglers were captured by the citizen's posse. In the ensuing fight, Pierson was knocked down and suffered a severe blow on the head, nearly killing him. Several others were severely abused, Garner and Bowman among that group.⁴⁵²

The prisoners were marched to Ewing's house eight miles away under the direction of Charles Moore. Trial was set for the next morning.⁴⁵³ Before daylight, Cummings was aroused from his sleep and told of the night's encounter. He sent Lieutenant James R. Stephenson and 50 soldiers to investigate.⁴⁵⁴ The trial was already in progress, justice acting quickly in those days! In fact, it was performed so fast Major Cummings called it a "mock" trial. Lieutenant Stephenson took the rioters from the settlers, and returned with them to the fort.⁴⁵⁵ George Wright describes it this way, very similar to the version just given:

" . . . about the time of tryal of the men before the Court a Lieut. with about forty men arived and demanded the men of the Court and the Court Refused to give them up. Whereupon the Lieut. ordered his men to form in line for battle and he forcibly took possession of them and succeeded in careing them safly to the fort. . . "⁴⁵⁶

The residents then elected Jesse Shelton, a good friend of John H. Fowler and a future land partner.⁴⁵⁷ He was to meet with Major Cummings and demand the surrender of the soldiers so that they might stand trail in court.⁴⁵⁸ Of course, Cummings refused.

Thirteen days after the actions of Lieutenant Stephenson, on February 2, 1825, some 200-300 men gathered either under the direction of Sheriff Wright, or three other men, Brice, Bowman and Jacob Pennington, depending upon which version is studied. George Wright, who possibly was there himself, says the sheriff called out the militia after Cummings refused to release the soldiers. They all met at the home of Joseph English on Clear Creek in the afternoon, and "prepared to storm the garrison and blow it all to hell."⁴⁵⁹ George Wright says they marched on the cantonment:

" . . . whereupon the Sheriff ordered the militia out and actually marched with [in] Two miles of the fort with a determination to capture the whole forse, The fort had about one Hundred men and the militia amounted to about Three hundred, all Eager for a fight as they looked upon the Soulders as a misfortune to the country "⁴⁶⁰

George says also that the soldiers were released by the militia and into the hands of the sheriff:

"Just as the Sheriff was about to march his men against the fort a flag of Truce was seen at a distance. Some were for taking the flag but the officers would not permit it to be done but Treated with them upon honorable terms and the soulders were delivered up and together with the offending officers into the Hands of the Sherriff to await their several Tryals."⁴⁶¹

In the March term of the Circuit Court, Sam C. Roane, a former member of the Legislative Council during the same time

Claiborne was in the General Assembly in Little Rock, investigated the riot but refused to prosecute the ringleaders without sworn testimony from Cummings.⁴⁶² He either could not, or would not, supply such evidence.⁴⁶³

Agitation continued as George describes the situation:

"This matter did not stop here but they [the soldiers] forcibly took possession of some two or three persons, citizens, and placed them in the guard house for some weeks and let them out again as soon as they were at liberty. . ."⁴⁶⁴

George, who was sixteen at the time of these events, says the citizens almost declared open warfare on the garrison's inhabitants. Whenever a soldier would leave the compound, especially when one rider went on his way alone, the Miller County residents "...would give chase as though they were after a mustang and very frequently Run them post chase into the fort and then turn and make good their Retreat to their hiding places."⁴⁶⁵

At this point Brigadier-General Henry Atkinson, commander of the Western Division of the U.S. Army, ordered an inquiry to be held at Cantonment Towson as soon after April 20 as it could be convened.⁴⁶⁶ Colonel S.B. Archer, Lieutenant-Colonel J.B. Many and Captain Nathaniel Young were to be members of the court. Many was instructed to replace Cummings as commander of the facility.⁴⁶⁷ Atkinson instructed that Many was to surrender every individual in the army who was subsequently proven guilty to the charges.⁴⁶⁸

Aaron Hanscom, who later became friends with William E. Woodruff while representing Miller County in Little Rock in the Fall of 1825, wrote the *Arkansas Gazette* publisher in mid-May that he felt the affair would be "favorable to the officers, more so than has been generally contemplated."⁴⁶⁹ He was right. The officers were acquitted of resistance to the civil authorities.⁴⁷⁰

The problems with Cantonment Towson and the attitude the settlers had with the soldiers would not die out, however. Events probably reached the peak of concern when whiskey peddler Jesse Cheek fell upon the new commandant of Towson, Captain RB. Hyde, while appearing in Judge Bowman's courtroom. Part of a group of what some called lawless settlers in the area, Cheek was brought before Judge Bowman under complaints from Captain Hyde on August 30, 1825. Hyde charged the same thing Cummings had been dealing with--Cheek was selling illegal whiskey to the soldiers.

While the trial was in process, Cheek was angered and a scuffle began, resulting in a severe beating to Captain Hyde with a club Cheek had brought into the courtroom. John Emberson intervened to prevent further harm. Judge Bowman fined Cheek \$15, but he absconded to the woods, saying he would travel to Little Rock and give his version of the "unjust" actions of the military officers. He did write a long and bitter letter defending his conduct, but his credibility was at a low ebb because of the many times he was a point of controversy, and the fact that he had passed counterfeit money nine years earlier in Missouri.⁴⁷¹

George Wright summed it up best, saying:

" . . . Really, they [the soldiers] were of no particular use as they could [not] protect themselves against the in Roads of the indians for when the indians caught any of the men out of the fort they would Kill and Rob them and the commander would call upon the citizens to come to their aid and chastize the indians, which they allways did with a great deal of satisfaction."⁴⁷²

Apparently clashes with the troops and officers continued until they were ordered from the garrison in 1829.⁴⁷³ "This left the country in allmost perfect peace and quiet for some Time, say several years," commented George on their departure. "Then in '31 the troops were ordered back and the Choctaw indians began to emigrate and settle in their country..."⁴⁷⁴

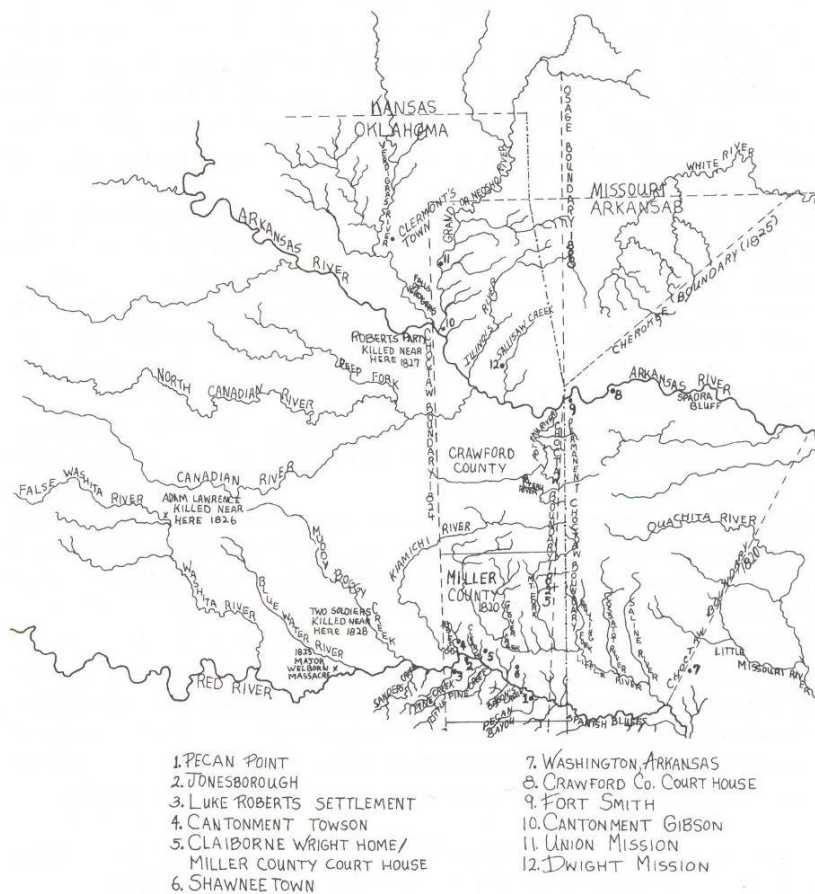
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Things may have been quiet as far as the soldiers were concerned, but Indian attacks had eliminated several of Claiborne's friends after 1825. Adam Lawrence came to mind. He had been killed on April 17, 1826, while capturing wild mustang along with his son, John, and nephews Henry and Adam Lawrence.⁴⁷⁵ They were attacked by Indians who later were identified as Pawnees. After quite a lengthy race through the woods, Adam and John were killed. Although his shirt was shot full of holes, young Adam managed to escape.

Henry and a man named Dewall were hunting in a different direction at the time, but were also attacked. Lawrence was killed, but Dewall and his swift horse managed to elude the savages. Other hunters were attacked that day in the same vicinity. The Pawnees later boasted that they had killed eight white men and that they intended to raid the Red River frontier in the next few months.⁴⁷⁶ Settlers tended to label unidentified Indians as "Pawnees," so just who committed the act is unknown.

There was also the time, later in July of 1826, when John Hall and a hunter named (William ?) Porter were captured by Osage Indians and beaten.⁴⁷⁷ Then the Indians stripped the whites and forced them to walk home naked and bare-foot across the prairies. They both made it through, suffering a severe sun-burn.⁴⁷⁸

This particular group of Indians was led by Mad Buffalo, son of Clermont, the famed Osage leader.⁴⁷⁹ Five days later, on August 14, they stole a number of horses almost under the shadow of Cantonment Towson, four miles away at John Stiles' home. On of the animals stolen was Major Cummings' riding horse!⁴⁸⁰



Readers of the *Arkansas Gazette* became very familiar with Mad Buffalo's escapades as early as Spring, 1821. He was probably given credit for more misery to settlers than he actually inflicted. In April of 1821, he, Money Purser, six other chiefs and about 400 Osage Indians appeared before Fort Smith, on the other side of the River. They wanted free access to the Fort so they could hunt in the area for a few days. They demanded provisions and ammunition. Disgruntled because the demands on the Fort were not met, they threatened to harm a soldier's family who lived across the River.

The Fort prepared for an attack after the Osages built rafts. The Indians left and went into the woods, however, firing upon and killing three visiting Quapaws. A hunter, Etienne Vaugine, narrowly escaped their attack by swimming the "Poto" and safely made it to the Fort. The soldier's family was also rescued and the Quapaw bodies were found mangled, with scalp and ears taken off, their heads severed from their bodies. One of the heads was found half a mile from the body; the other was not found,

Mad Buffalo's contingent went on to Lee's Creek, killing three Delaware there, continuing their feud with the other tribes, especially their hated enemies, the Cherokees.⁴⁸¹

After the *Gazette* readers absorbed this account, fear of the Osage grew to alarming proportions. And for good reason. A little over two years later A.H. Sevier returned to Little Rock from

Hempstead and Miller Counties to tell another horror story to the editor, Woodruff.

It seemed that a party of 21 was hunting on the Red River under the employment of a Major John McElmurray of Cadron. Isaac Pennington told Sevier that the party was attacked by Osage Indians--about 200. Although the hunters resisted, the superior force of the Indians wiped out the entire group except Pennington. He happened to be a short distance from the crowd when the attack commenced and hid in the cane-breaks.

"After waiting some time, Mr. P. ventured to the camp, . . . and he there beheld the mangled remains of several of his companions, MURDERED, SCALPED AND STRIPPED! and found the camp completely pillaged. "⁴⁸²

Pennington recognized the body of old Major Curtis Welborn. Grabbing a piece of buffalo's tongue, Pennington took off for the Red River settlements to the east. The Indians followed him for two days. Finally, Pennington fell in with a group of mustang hunters under the leadership of Judge Brice. But, this band also suffered from the Osage when the Indians stole several of their horses.

"This outrage took place on the Blue River, a tributary of the Red river. Previous to the attack, the party discovered. . . the *head of a man* (scalped) sticking on a pole, in a prairie. . . In consequence. . . a party of 4 men were sent to the Indians. This party, however, did not return and it is supposed they were also murdered." ⁴⁸³

The November 17, 1823 attack by Mad Buffalo and his 200 warriors did not eliminate the entire hunting party as Pennington had thought. Only Welborn, of Hempstead County, three men named Sloan, Lester and Deterline, and a negro named Ben, who belonged to Antoine Barraque, a Frenchman who headed the party, were killed. Apparently McElmurray, Francis Imbeau and Mitchell Bone, as well as the Indians with them, survived, but were lost from Pennington.

The thrilling tale of his escape produced great excitement and uneasiness among the newly organized missionaries in the area.⁴⁸⁴ The white settlers organized for defense.⁴⁸⁵ In Miller County, the militia of the Ninth Regiment officers were Colonel Jacob Pennington, Lieutenant Colonel John Clark and Major Nathaniel Robbins, all commissioned on June 10, 1823.⁴⁸⁶

This time Clermont's son had gone too far. Skitok, as Mad Buffalo was called by his people, met with Major Cummings at the trading post owned by Colonel A.P. Chouteau in December, 1823.⁴⁸⁷ The chiefs there--Clermont, Mad Buffalo and Moi-neh-per-sha--assured Major Cummings that they were distressed about the encounter. They said the leaders of the band who took part in it did not know until after they fired that the white men occupied the camp. Clermont promised to call his people together and ascertain their sentiments on the subject of surrendering the leaders of the attack.⁴⁸⁸ The Indians procrastinated and on the 25th, finally came to Fort Smith to confer with Colonel Mathew Arbuckle. They tried to convince the doubting commander there that the leaders of the party had tried in vain to restrain the young warriors. However, the aftermath of the fight was too horrible to give credibility to

their story.

Colonel Arbuckle demanded the surrender of those responsible or military action would be instigated against the tribe. On March 13, 1824, a final demand was made of Clermont to meet with Major Cummings at the Falls on the Verdigris River.⁴⁸⁹ Only Clermont came to represent the tribe. He told the major that the tribe was unwilling to discuss the matter of surrender.

Colonel Arbuckle had no choice now but to follow previous orders given by General Winfield Scott, commander of the Western Department of the U.S. Army in New Orleans. Soldiers would be stationed at the mouth of the Verdigris. The result was the founding of Cantonment Gibson, located on the east side of the Neosho (Grand) River, three miles above the mouth.⁴⁹⁰

The location of the troops, and the efforts of Captain Nathaniel Pryor, a trader, caused the accused persons to be surrendered soon after the arrival and establishment of the garrison.⁴⁹¹ Six Osage warriors were delivered to Cantonment Gibson on June 8. On June 25, five were delivered to Acting-Governor Robert Crittenden in Little Rock. The sixth had escaped from Captain John Philbrook the first night after they left Fort Gibson.⁴⁹²



Mad Buffalo

Mad Buffalo, Little Eagle, Little Bear, Little Rattlesnake and Caddo Killer were indicted for the murder of Curtis Welborn and party, consisting of five persons in all, on the Blue River, November 17.⁴⁹³

Mad Buffalo was tried separately from the other four. They were all prosecuted by Sam C. Roane before Judge Andrew Scott's

court. Roane was assisted by Claiborne Wright's friend, A.H. Sevier. Robert C. Oden and Townsend Dickinson were attorneys for the defendants. The trials, after all this time, would only take one day, January 15!

The news of the atrocities was so wide-spread that over 50 candidates for the jury were rejected before the trial began. Mad Buffalo was tried first. The *Gazette* reported:

"It was clearly proven on the trial, that the prisoners composed part of the Chiefs or Head-Men of a party of Osage warriors, who started from the north fork of the Canadian,. . . with the avowed intention of making war upon the Caddo Indians. That some ten days subsequent to their departure, an attack was made by a party of Osages on a camp of American, French, and half-breed Quapaw hunters, who were hunting on the De La Blue, a country to which the Osages have no claim. . ."⁴⁹⁴

Mad Buffalo was the only one of the five to speak on the subject, saying it had been done by mistake. It was pointed out that the Chiefs stayed behind in battle to employ themselves in smoking their pipes, asking the Great Spirit to give success to their warriors.⁴⁹⁵ Mad Buffalo allowed that because of this, he was not guilty.

However, the jury found a verdict of *GUILTY*.

In the second trial, Little Bear, Little Rattlesnake and Caddo Killer were acquitted, but Little Eagle received a conviction from the jury. He and Mad Buffalo were sentenced to be hung on December 21, 1824, thirteen months after the murders.⁴⁹⁶

Believing their work done, the citizens of Arkansas went back to more peaceful thoughts, not suspecting a long chain of events would bring Mad Buffalo back into their lives in July, 1826.⁴⁹⁷

The *Gazette* announced on December 24, 1824 that Crittenden "has granted a respite, for 15 days, to the two Osage Indians who were sentenced to have been executed in this place (Little Rock) on this day."⁴⁹⁸ On December 28, another delay was granted, this time until February 1825:

"Mr. Crittenden has received an order to suspend the execution of the Osage Indians, and instructed to report minutely all the circumstances of the case to the President [James Monroe]."⁴⁹⁹

Respite was granted again until April 4, then to April 19 and finally to June 21, 1825.⁵⁰⁰ Then, in the same issue of the *Gazette* that a court inquiry was ordered at Cantonment Towson on the horse-borrowing controversy, Woodruff announced in his column that Mad Buffalo and Little Eagle were pardoned! President John Quincy Adams set them at liberty on April 30.⁵⁰¹

The pair departed Little Rock with Mad Buffalo in poor health, nearly starved. They expressed their dissatisfaction as they traveled back to their people by separate paths.⁵⁰² The white settlers were expressing their feelings about the release, too!

By July, 1826, Mad Buffalo and the Osage were back down near the Kiamichi River settlements causing trouble. A group of six Miller and Hempstead County residents, led by Richard Poston, took out after the Indians. Hall and Porter were included in this small party.⁵⁰³ After the long walk, the weather-beaten pair of

Anglos returned to Pecan Point. Another pursuit party was supposedly formed, with some soldiers involved, but no action came of it.⁵⁰⁴

Mad Buffalo would roam the area for at least another decade, causing problems and placing fear in the lives of the Northeast Texas residents.⁵⁰⁵

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Even though the Lawrences were residents of future Texas, they were killed in what would later become Oklahoma.⁵⁰⁶ The first documented murder of white settlers by Indians in what became Texas was that of Luke Roberts, another acquaintance of Claiborne Wright. Luke and John Roberts had settled in where is now Lamar County, on the Upper Pine Creek, a mile or two from the Red River, in September, 1820.⁵⁰⁷

This whole affair, which happened in April of 1827, was a fiasco. The Osage attacked the small settlement and killed Roberts, and perhaps some others. The nephews and sons of Luke Roberts, three in number, and others took out after the Osages, killing and scalping a Christian Osage on the Grand River, near the Union Mission. Aroused by this, the larger body of Osages in turn pursued. They killed and scalped the entire party of five.⁵⁰⁸

A year later, scared and fed up, the *Petition* to Izard was sent by the citizens and confirmed by the Grand Jury of Miller County. In response, Governor Izard sent Colonel William Rector, adjutant General of the Arkansas Militia, to Pecan Point in April of 1828.⁵⁰⁹ He asked Captain Hyde at Cantonment Towson for help, but was refused.⁵¹⁰ The garrison was short of hands and too weak to spare a contingent, he said. Rector, somewhat disturbed with Hyde and his attitude, then called upon the citizens of Miller County. Sixty-three volunteers, commanded by Major Pierson, responded.⁵¹¹

The force marched upon villages of Delaware and Shawnees nearby and without incident told them they had 20 days to move. They did.⁵¹²

But since Shawneetown and the Clear Creek settlements would no longer be a buffer between the Pecan Point-Jonesborough settlers and Indian Territory, troubles would crop up now and then and continue into the 1840's.

8

An Era Ends

On December 16, 1829, William Woodruff sadly placed an item in the regular page three column. It read:

"DIED-At his residence in Miller County, on the 21st ult. *Clayborn Wright*, Esq., aged 45 years. His loss is deplored by an affectionate family, and lamented by his acquaintances in general-communicated."⁵¹³

Claiborne Wright was apparently buried near Shawneetown. He was placed next to Betty, his strong and loving first wife, who preceded him in death almost a decade earlier.⁵¹⁴

Left behind were too many young children who needed his guidance and support. Claiborne's life had been relatively quiet during 1829. Most of the settlers realized after the burning of the courthouse a year before that in time they would be citizens of the Republic of Mexico.⁵¹⁵ A divided allegiance existed for some time, however. For example, Miller County officials also applied to

⁵¹³ *Arkansas Gazette*, December 16, 1829, 3:2.

⁵¹⁴ *Mary Vivian Daniel (MVD) Papers*, Genealogical Notes, 15. Mary Daniel says a limestone slab originally marked the graves. *Steely Papers*, Claiborne Wright files. On July 21, 1947, a letter was sent to Miss Daniel from Eunice Fooshee of Idabel, Oklahoma. In part, it said:

"I have been to the Shawneetown cemetery, but without success. Four of us went all through the thicket and found only 4 stones, two had the name Gunn, one Stuckey, the other, Green. I never saw such a wilderness in my life, it is actually like a tropical jungle. . . We saw several sunken places that could be graves. If the stones were the flat type they no doubt have been covered with dirt for years. . . no care for it [the cemetery] has been taken in anyone's memory."

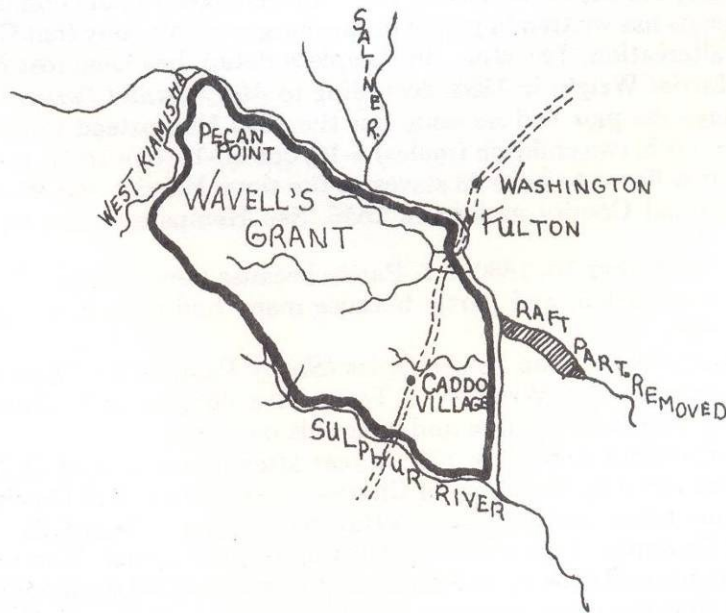
In December, 1949, according to MVD's notes, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jenkins (of Jenkins Marble Yard), their son Edward Ross Jenkins and Mary Daniel drove to Shawneetown and to the Old Cemetery. They met with the owner of the area, a man named Rodgers.

"Had to cut way through with hoe. Only four marked graves--marble headstones fallen down--dates in 1880's. But, sunken places all over the woodland where sites of old graves [were] covered with almost 2 ft. of soil. A few dug into showed complete disintegration of contents."

In November, 1981, Edgar Wright and this author (Steely) investigated the site and found about the same evidence except that then the cows are allowed on the site, resulting in a cleared area. Sunken places were to be seen, a few wooden foot markers and one grave stone with "D.H. Stuckey" on it. The confusion on the age of Claiborne Wright will continue, therefore. The family tends to go along with 50 years of age, based upon MVD's dates of 1779-1829.

Benjamin R. Milam for land He was an agent for Arthur G. Wavel's Colony. County Judge John Morton, Nathaniel Crittenden, the court clerk, Sheriff Charles Burkham, Coroner George Collom, James Clark, member of the Arkansas Territorial House of Representatives, and George F. Lawton, the Miller County choice to serve in the Legislative Council, were all anxious to obtain land officially under the Empresario's grant.⁵¹⁶

Each took an oath before Milam that he was a Mexican citizen, even though they were official members of the law in the Arkansas Territory. It was a result of confusing times, for sure.⁵¹⁷ As George Wright said, "Two things are sacrosanct to the pioneer-- his land title, and his wife," and he wrote them in this order!⁵¹⁸



⁵¹⁵ Rex W. Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities In Northeast Texas, 1803-1845* (unpublished Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, June, 1937), 102-104. It is now on Kindle, entitled *Red River Pioneers*.

⁴²⁵ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 162.

⁴²⁶ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XX, 629.

⁴²⁷ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 162. Cummings had written Izard, "The people on the south side of Red river seem determined to throw off all allegiance to our Government . . . If these people are permitted to carry their unlawful designs into effect, it will probably be the means of breaking up the settlements on this frontier." See *Arkansas Gazette*, November 6, 1827, 4:1.

⁴²⁸ *Arkansas Gazette*, November 6, 1827, 4:1.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, Also, Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 163.

⁴³⁰ Grant Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers* (Norman, 1936), 241. The establishment was simply hard to reach and man. In addition to the attitude of the Miller County residents toward the soldiers, the place was eventually abandoned because of the difficulty of navigation on the Red River, caused by recent additions to the Great Raft, and because there was no direct wagon road to the location from Natchitoches.

⁴³¹ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 164. Aaron Hanscom sent a letter, however, stating he thought the efforts were serious. "I believe Messrs. Burkham and Robb'ins are really making efforts to get up a military expedition, for the purpose of going against the Comanches." *Arkansas Gazette*, November 6, 1827, 4:3.

⁴³² *Arkansas Gazette*, October 23, 1827, 3:4. Fowler was joined in the General Assembly by James Clark of Miller County, who would serve in the House of

Claiborne had stepped aside from the political arena, apparently, giving only advice to those in charge. The seat of justice had been temporarily moved to Martin's house, on the south side of the River, right after the fire. But, Martin had seen his house used very little for law proceedings. In fact, concern was expressed on this matter in the *Arkansas Gazette*:

"Miller County--This county, it is generally supposed, will principally fall within the territory of the Republic of Mexico, whenever the boundary line between the country and the U. States shall be run, in consequence of which few or no Courts have been held in it during the last two or three years."⁵¹⁹

Representatives. Fowler was in the Legislative Council chamber.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, October 9, 1827, 2:2.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, October 16, 1827, 1:1.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:3.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, October 30, 1827, 1:3.

⁴³⁷ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XX, 629.

⁴³⁸ *George T. Wright Papers*, lone Lewis Copies, 41, and Rex W. Strickland, "Establishment Of Old Miller County, Arkansas Territory," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, XVIII, No.2, (June, 1940), 166. The Shawnees had two villages, one at Spanish Bluffs and the other on the headwaters of Mill Creek.

⁴³⁹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XX, 630.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, The Wright family is not sure when McAtee first met Claiborne Wright but most likely it was in Hempstead County, near Washington, Arkansas, before 1827.

⁴⁴¹ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 8, and Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 819. John Bowman was the magistrate for Washington Township from February 28, 1823 until February 3, 1825.

⁴⁴² Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 126.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ *Arkansas Gazette*, June 28, 1825, 3:1. This version says Lieutenant Thomas was going to purchase the horse if he liked him.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, April 26, 1825, 3:1. Major Cummings wrote that the horse was hired, and that Brice asked for "large damages," which Thomas thought unjustified.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, June 28, 1825, 3:1. Brice officially charged the horse was improperly ridden.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, and April 26, 1825, 3:1. Major Cummings called it a mock trial "at which the plaintiff did not attend" and judgement was \$15 more than the plaintiff had demanded. J.G.W. Pierson wrote saying Brice did ask for \$50 damages but offered to take less. Thomas complained of the want of the Common Law throughout the trial. When asked by Bowman just what he meant, Thomas said, "the laws of the United States." Judge Bowman quickly answered that the laws of the United States had nothing to do with the local concerns of this Territory! Thomas was astonished, as was Cummings.

⁴⁴⁸ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 126. Judge Bowman and William Hillhouse were brothers-in-law. Bowman married Margaret Hillhouse, James Garner's niece. Hillhouse married Lucy Bowman.

⁴⁴⁹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 819.

⁴⁵⁰ *Arkansas Gazette*, April 26, 1825, 3:1. Conflicts in the stories leave the next step in this story cloudy. Cummings says that the soldiers stopped at a distillery in the neighborhood on their way back to Towson. ". . . they were so well plyed with whiskey, that they soon became drunk, and in that situation were tied and abused in a brutal manner. . ." The narrative story used here, though, is the same as used by Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 126.

⁴⁵¹ Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIX, 797, and *Arkansas Gazette*, June

It would be almost a year after Claiborne's death before matters would settle down enough for Judge Thomas Eskridge to hold court in what was left of Miller County.⁵²⁰ In the meantime, Milam was assisting the survey crew to determine the Texas and Arkansas, as well as the Louisiana boundaries.⁵²¹

In a sense, Miller County was being reborn in 1829 and 1830. Records were gone from previous transactions and the old settlers were fading, either dying or leaving. Claiborne wasn't the only one to meet his end that winter. Aaron Hanscom, merchant and former member of the Legislative Council, died in February, thus quieting the pen of the most frequent writer of events in the

28,1825,3:1. Claiborne Wright was sheriff of Miller County from February 19, 1823 to December 31, 1827, being recommissioned probably twice, once in a period between 1823 and 1827 (date unknown) and the second time on April 14, 1827.

⁴⁵² *Arkansas Gazette*, June 28, 1825, 3:1.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 8.

⁴⁵⁷ See Red River County early land deed records and *Steely Papers*, Littleton Fowler Papers-SMU (copies from Bridwell Library collection), 47. John H. Fowler, in a letter to his brother, Littleton, says he is raising money to recommence his partnership with Shelton and Albert Kimball.

⁴⁵⁸ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 127.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 127-128, and Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 8-9.

⁴⁶⁰ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 8-9.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶² Hempstead County, Arkansas, *Order Book A*, June 28, 1819-March 3, 1822 (*Steely Papers*, Southwest Arkansas Research file, 14). Samuel C. Roane had been a prosecuting attorney for the Territory of Arkansas, appearing as early as 1819 in the Court of Common Pleas held at John English's house in Hempstead County. Claiborne Wright, a magistrate in 1819, met him at these Court proceedings, the same way he met Chester Ashley. Lonnie J. White, *Politics On The Southwestern Frontier, Arkansas Territory, 1819-1836* (Memphis, 1964), 28. White says Roane was named United States Attorney in 1820. He was a Tennessean and was elected to the Legislative Council from Clark County, Arkansas, in 1821. See *Arkansas Gazette*, October 6, 1821, 3:1. It is more than probable that Roane came from Smith County, Tennessee, and knew Claiborne there. See *Smith County, Tennessee Court Records, 1815-1820* (Tennessee Archives, Nashville, microfilm roll 41), 80, or *Steely Papers*, Kentucky-Tennessee-Illinois-Indiana Research, 89.

⁴⁶³ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 128.

⁴⁶⁴ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 9.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁶ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 128..

⁴⁶⁷ *Arkansas Gazette*, May 3, 1825, 3:1. Major Cummings was moved to Fort Gibson. *Arkansas Gazette*, July 5, 1825, 3:1.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, May 3, 1825, 3:1.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, June 7, 1825, 3:2. Hanscom added, "Notwithstanding the little hope left to us by the Choctaw treaty, we still feel disposed to petition [the] government in the strongest terms for relief, conscious that if nothing [is to] be gained, nothing can be lost by it." Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 129. Dr. Strickland concludes the author of this letter is Hanscom, who was a member of the House in 1825 and tied with James Clark in Miller County's election in 1827. He lost to Clark in a special election held on August 25, 1827. See White, *Politics*, 55 & 77n, and *Arkansas Gazette*, September 11, 1827, 3:1.

Miller County area.⁵²² Little news of Miller County would be found in the *Gazette* afterwards.

New faces were emerging in the governmental structure along with some of the old, more experienced leaders. William Fowler Wright was a justice of peace for Washington Township; Levi Rice and Reuben Ratliff joined Morton as JP's in Franklin Township; and John Naill was a fresh face in Pecan Township, joining old hands George C. Wetmore and John G.W. Pierson.⁵²³

⁴⁷⁰ *Arkansas Gazette*, July 5, 1825, 3:1. The *Gazette* reported, "Result of the investigation has not been made publicly known, but it is generally understood that the officers have been acquitted."

⁴⁷¹ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 125; *Arkansas Gazette*, August 30, 1825, 3:1; and September 6, 1825, 3:1. More and more "lawless" individuals were settling in the area. Strickland, *Chronicles*, XVIII, No.2, 170.

⁴⁷² Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 8. An example is told in the September 23, 1828, 3:1, issue of the *Gazette*. Two soldiers, Thomas Gloyd and Musician Glenn were with a group of six soldiers who had gone fishing on August 31, 1828. Six miles from Towson, shots rang out. Their bodies, scalped, and shot full of arrows, were brought back to the Post. A party of about 40 mounted men, citizens and friendly Indians, and a detachment from the Post set out the next day. Four days later they returned with the scalps of the two men and those of three Indians. The culprits were Pawnees. ". . . much credit is due the citizens. . . and also to Mr. Aldrich, the Suttler, who rode the whole night to muster them."

⁴⁷³ *Arkansas Gazette*, June 17, 1829, 3:1. "All is hurry and confusion here, to get off from this neglected region, and out of the reach of the devastation and ruin which is anticipated from the hostile Indians," the letter said. They estimated over 30,000 Indians were now on the Red River or near it.

⁴⁷⁴ Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 9. Harold Mabry, *Profiles Of The Past* (DeQueen, Arkansas, 1979), 2. The second location of Fort Towson, built in 1831, was six miles up Gates Creek. The first location was at the mouth of the Kiamichi River where it empties into the Red River.

⁴⁷⁵ Strickland, *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, XIX, No.1, 45.

⁴⁷⁶ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 151. Apparently the Pawnees never backed up their threat.

⁴⁷⁷ The late John Porter of Blossom said he was a descendent. See *Steely Collection*, John Porter File, Gee Library.

⁴⁷⁸ *Arkansas Gazette*, August 29, 1826, 3:1. "They were stripped entirely naked," according to this account. In a previous letter to the *Gazette*, dated August 3 and printed August 15, 1826, 3:1, it was said they were allowed to keep on "their pantaloons." It is assumed that Porter's name was William because he was on the List of Delinquents, *Arkansas Gazette*, July 24, 1827, 3:5.

⁴⁷⁹ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 163n. See map on page 139 to locate Clermont's town.

⁴⁸⁰ *Arkansas Gazette*, August 29, 1826, 3:1. Mad Buffalo was wearing Porter's hat when Stiles saw him.

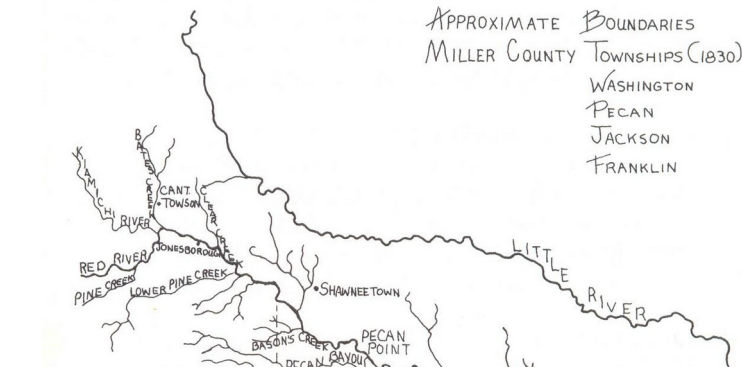
⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, May 12, 1821, 3:2.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, December 9, 1823, 3:1.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages: Children Of The Middle Waters*, (Norman, 1961), 493. The Union Mission, which had its beginning in February, 1821, was located on the Neosho River.

⁴⁸⁵ Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 165.



486 *Arkansas Gazette*, September 28, 1824, 3:1; and June 14, 1825, 3:1. All officers of the Arkansas Militia under Brigadier General William Bradford as listed in the June 14 issue. The Fifth Regiment in Hempstead County was headed by Colonel Thomas Dooley and Lieutenant Colonel John Wilson. Many other familiar names that worked with Claiborne Wright in court cases and business dealings are also listed, such as James M. Stewart, Bailey English, James Fowler and William Berry. Others, like Matt Click, are listed and later came to live in Miller County; therefore, afterwards to Red and Lamar Counties in Texas.

487 Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 163n. Mad Buffalo's actual name was Chatokawashepeshe. See online in 2007 this website: <http://arcourts.ualr.edu/case-051/51.1.htm>.

488 *Ibid.*, 166.

489 *Ibid.*, 167.

490 *Ibid.*, 169.

491 "Grant Foreman, "Nathaniel Pryor," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, "VII (March-December, 1929), 158. Pryor had been an officer in the Battle of New Orleans and became very knowledgeable of Western lands. He learned the Osage language while under the license to trade with the Indians. He had previously served on an expedition to the Pacific Ocean in 1803-5 with Franklin Wharton in the capacity of first sergeant. In February of 1820, a band of Osage under Mad Buffalo killed three Cherokee hunters on the Poteau River, but later the Cherokee warriors captured Mad Buffalo near Pryor's trading house on the mouth of the Verdigris. Pryor contrived the escape of his friend, which incensed the Cherokee. They broke open Pryor's facility and stole 150 pounds of his beaver furs.

492 Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 171.

493 *Arkansas Gazette*, October 19, 1824, 3:1.

494 *Ibid.*, October 26, 1824, 3:2.

495 *Ibid.*

496 *Ibid.*, Mad Buffalo was described as being considerably advanced in years, large and well-proportioned. . . possesses a superior mind and great intelligence. Little Eagle was also elderly at that time, but of less prepossessing appearance. He remained quiet during the trial. Mad Buffalo's painting by George Catlin in 1836 is on page 172 in Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*. It may be found at several places on the internet in 2007.

http://americanart.si.edu/t2go/1lw/images/1985.66.41_1b.jpg. It belongs now to the Smithsonian's Museum of American Art and can be viewed in Washington D.C.

497 Foreman, *Indians And Pioneers*, 173. Colonel Mathew Arbuckle had immediately written the War Department after the sentencing, saying that he thought clemency ought to be extended to the convicted Indians. Crittenden opposed this but was instructed by the War Department to stay the execution.

498 *Arkansas Gazette*, December 21, 1824, 3:1.

499 *Ibid.*, December 28, 1824, 3:1.

500 *Ibid.*, February 22, 1825, 3:1; April 5, 1825, 3:1; and April 29, 1825, 3:1.

501 *Ibid.*, May 3, 1825, 3:1.

Things were changing and Claiborne Wright, for the first time in almost 14 years, would not be there to observe the events. His life had ended, quickly and surprisingly, because of what happened that night of November 22, 1829, when two men got into a fight at a local saloon.⁵²⁴ The fight carried out into the streets and Claiborne assisted Sheriff Pierson in breaking up the vicious melee. However, in the confusion, Claiborne was badly hurt in the scuffle, stabbed deeply in his stomach. Four days later, he died.⁵²⁵

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⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, June 7, 1825, 3:1. "We understand they were somewhat dissatisfied with their detention here," wrote Woodruff in his column, "and that they gave a very. . . amusing account of their trial, imprisonment and treatment. . ."

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, August 15, 1826, 3:1 and August 29, 1826, 3:1.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, August 29, 1826, 3:1.

⁵⁰⁵ Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "Dutch, The Cherokee," *Chronicles Of Oklahoma*, XXVII (Spring, 1949-Winter, 1950), 262. This was apparently the second time Nathaniel Pryor helped Mad Buffalo escape. Some sources say he lived with the tribe in disgrace.

⁵⁰⁶ There is some speculation it may have been near Paris, Texas. See the Anders File, *Steely Collection*, Gee Library.

⁵⁰⁷ Neville, *History of Lamar County*, 14. Luke and John Roberts came to Miller County in 1820. Local literature by Neville, and copied by others, has always said John Emberson was the first settler to live in Lamar County. The year was 1824. But, reading carefully, Neville's comments are that Emberson was the first family west of where is now Arthur City (p. 11). Neville does say (p. 78) that John and Luke Roberts, J.G.W. Pierson and two Masons settled near where there had been a fortification for some years manned by the French or Spanish. This was in 1820. Pierson was not killed in the fracas, and was later in South Texas as a member of the Somervell Expedition into Mexico. He drew a white bean in the death lottery. Pierson had been also a delegate from Viesca to the Constitutional Convention at San Felipe, all this happening after he served as sheriff of Miller County. See also, Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 152-153; Gulick, Allen, Elliott and Smither, (ed), *Papers of Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar*, III (Austin, 1968), 276; *Clarksville Northern Standard*, August 25, 1882; and *Record Of Land Commissioners* (transcribed), Red River County, 52.

Adam Lawrence and Mansel Mason were brothers-in-law of probably Luke Roberts. Each married a daughter of William Ragsdale. See Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 152. Thomas Ragsdale (*Lamar Papers*, III, 278) says another family, the Robards, were involved, but his writing is very suspect. John Roberts was not killed, according to Strickland, 152.

John Emberson, Allen Carter and five other white men do claim the distinction of being the first to explore the Lamar County area. After the Battle of New Orleans, the group (which may have included Claiborne Wright?) came up the Red River and stayed in the country for about six months. Emberson returned home to Virginia and later married Carter's sister, Matilda, March 1, 1820, but not before he had returned again to trap in the area, this time in 1816. The couple settled first in Arkansas proper, but came to Lamar County in 1824. See Peter and Judith Carter, "The Descendents Of Charles And Lucy Carter," *Early Carters In Scott County, Virginia*, II (1981), 72 and 74.

⁵⁰⁸ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 153, and *Lamar Papers*, III, 278. Thomas Ragsdale wrote that two Roberts (one was probably W.P. Roberts), one Mason and two friendly Indians who accompanied them, hid in a sink hole near the Osage Village and attacked at daylight, fighting all day, "and would have made their escape, but one of them had his thigh broken, and the others would not leave him. During the night their ammunition gave out, they were taken prisoner, and their heads cut off."

⁵⁰⁹ *Arkansas Gazette*, April 30, 1828, 3:1.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, June 18, 1828, 3:1. Captain Hyde was later ordered arrested in June,

William McAtee assisted Harriet afterwards.⁵²⁶ Many of the some 400 residents still left in the county were in observance of the funeral, paying their respects.⁵²⁷

That year Claiborne may have been preparing for another move. He sold not only "old" Hardy, who was now 34, but Jin, 30, her sons, Abe and Chain, nine years old, and Alfred, 5. Ike, another of the original group that came to Texas in 1816, was sold also. But, Travis Wright purchased all for \$2,000, so they stayed within the family.⁵²⁸

Speculation as to what Claiborne Wright would have done in the war with the Mexicans seven years later leads to many wild assumptions! Surely, he would have assisted in finding a quick location for the county seat.⁵²⁹ Perhaps he would have met with Sam Houston and Davey Crockett when they came through Jonesborough on their way to help Texas gain independence.⁵³⁰ But, as it turned out, his son, George, went in his place.⁵³¹

For a half-century Claiborne Wright survived all the rigors of frontier life. Shawneetown, Towson and Clear Creek's settlements were gone. Almost all of Miller County was practically abolished, that which remained being either a part of the newly formed Sevier County, or that old part of the county south of the Red River.⁵³² Now, Claiborne was gone, just before the bulk of the Choctaws were to arrive and settle on his old farm. It was ironic the big man would die simply by attempting to stop a fight. In some minds, he should have died at the Alamo!⁵³³ Or, at San Jacinto. Or, earlier with Milam at San Antonio. It should have been

but for another matter. He refused, this time, to assist in the arrest of the Cantonment Towson sutler, William King, who was wanted for abduction of a man. Both Hyde and King eventually went to New York to stand trial. See also *Gazette*, August 6, 1828, 3:1.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, May 7, 1828, 3: 1. "Col. R. was informed by an Officer of that post, that there were 60 men reported fit for duty on the same morning."

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, May 14, 1828, 3:1. Mentioning the *Petition* submitted to him early in April 1828, Governor George Izard posted GENERAL ORDERS in the paper asking Major Pierson to furnish the Adjutant General with a roll of the men who accompanied him to Pecan Point to remove the Shawnees and Delawares. He wanted to pay them for their active duty.

Chapter 8:

⁵¹⁶ *Footprints* (publication by Fort Worth Genealogical Society), XVII, No.2 (May, 1974), 57. General Arthur Goodall Wavell, an author and British soldier, came to Mexico as a military advisor in about 1822. He immediately was able to assist Stephen F. Austin and Milam because of his influence. The first agreement saw Wavell sharing in land and profits with Austin. Later Austin canceled this. Wishing still to establish a colony, in 1826 Wavell received a grant as Empresario from the Mexican government. It began at the junction of Sulphur Fork and the Red River of Natchitoches, ran its border along the River until it hit the Kiamichi River mouth, then back toward the source of the Sulphur and back to the junction (See map). The Wavell Red River colony never came into its own even though settlers received land grants in the area. Wavell returned to England. Shortly after receiving his contract in 1826, Wavell had given to Milam his power of attorney to survey, register and give title to this land. The original list of the 100 families was lost, but a copy was eventually found in the *Collin McKinney Papers*. A translated copy of the Spanish document is on page 64 of *Footprints*. *Arkansas Gazette*, February 23, 1830, 3:2; Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 168 and 186; and *Registro de las familias introducidas par el Ciudadano Benjamin R. Milam, apodorado del Ciudadano Arthur G. Wavel, etc., etc.* Strickland said he obtained a Photostat copy at the Texas State Library.

a death more illustrious than just a knife wound in a bar brawl.

No matter what it should have been, the younger Wrights would have to fill his shoes in the battle to gain independence for Texas and to establish a governmental Republic.

Claiborne Wright, the pioneer who had braved the ordeals and impossibilities of travel to settle *Six Months From Tennessee*, was gone.

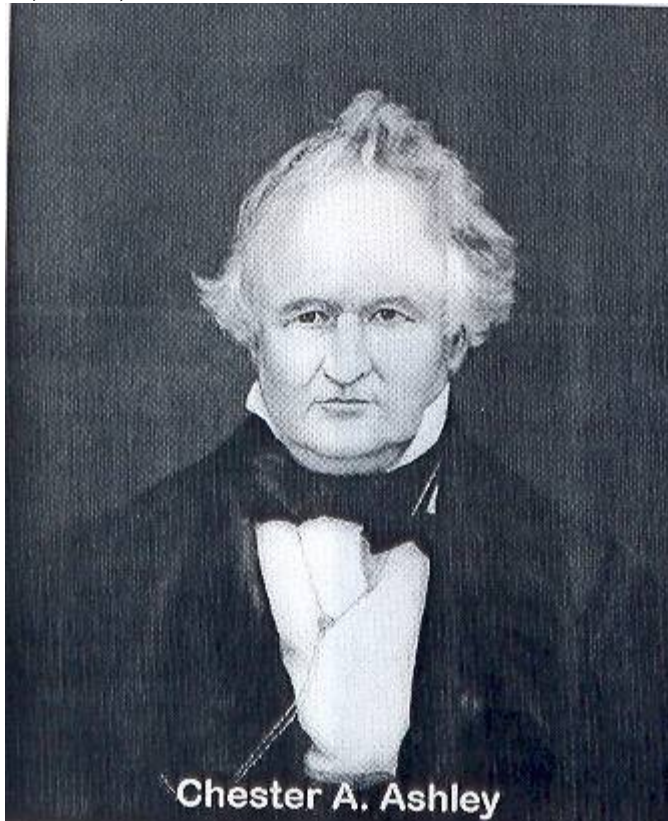
APPENDIX

Notes of Interest

* George C. Wetmore, who was listed as dead in 1822, was between 80-90 according to the 1830 Texas census.

* Although Cornelius Brown lived in the Clear Creek settlement, he apparently had a home in Hempstead County. On October 1, 1824, his executors, Claiborne Wright and Jane Brown, sold a certain improvement situated in Hempstead County, on the Ozan Creek, "it being the place that said Brown lived on, in his lifetime, and also the place whereon Thomas Wilson now lives, as by reference to a conveyance by Moss for Hopkins, to said Brown. . ." (Hempstead County *Deed Book B*, 14. They sold the acreage to Whitney Fuller and James Miller Fowler.

* Prudence Brown, who married John McMurry, listed that she had a brother-in-law, James, and two sisters-in-law, Elizabeth Rust and Jane Maddox. (See Hempstead County Wills, wl-126)



* Chester Ashley, the Arkansas politician, has a very similar look in his painting hanging on the Arkansas Archives wall as does the painting done of George Wright many years later. Ashley was born at Amherst, Massachusetts in 1791, but at three his family moved to Hudson, New York. He graduated in 1813 from Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts and later from Litchfield Law School. He moved to Edwardsville, Illinois in 1818, to St. Louis in 1819 and to Little Rock in 1821.

* Ashley was involved in a nasty incident at the *Arkansas Gazette* office in 1828. John T. Garrett came into the *Gazette* building holding a pistol and told publisher W.E. Woodruff that he would cowhide or kill Ashley. He left, but later returned while Ashley was there. Woodruff grabbed Garrett and the shot missed Ashley. Ashley in turn shot but hit Woodruff! Another shot killed Garrett, but the jury never decided which gun killed Garrett.

- * John H. Fowler married three Elizabeths. The first was the widow of Thomas Denton. See Steely and Roden, *The Journey Across America 1630-1931*. This marriage took place about December 13, 1825. She died apparently between 1827-28. In about February 13, 1832, Fowler then married Elizabeth Stevenson Johnson, widow of John Johnson of Hempstead County. She died December 9, 1834. See *Arkansas Gazette*. About September 26, 1837, Fowler married Betsey Alexander, a widow of Reese Alexander and daughter of Edward Johnson. They divorced, but apparently had two children: Susan "Sue" Clara, born January 10, 1839; and John Littleton, born September 9, 1840.
- * Several times contested elections were won by the complainant. For example, David Clark petitioned in 1823 that Elijah Carter had not been fairly elected to the Council. Thomas Polk petitioned against the election of Joshua Ewing to the House. A committee studied the problem and found that Polk had a majority of three votes! But, they said that the papers purporting to be depositions had not been taken in due form of law. Therefore, they were not received as evidence. It was suggested that Ewing retain his seat. However, the house went into a committee of the whole and after some deliberation, voted to admit Polk instead of Ewing! (*Arkansas Gazette*, October 11, 1823, 1:2).
- * Duels were "popular" ways to settle arguments in the early days of the Arkansas Territory. For instance, in March of 1820 RC. Oden killed a member of the House of Representatives, General William O. Allen (*Arkansas Gazette*, March 25, 1820, 3:1), and on October 29, opposite the mouth of the White River, Robert Crittenden and James S. Conway fought a battle. Conway was wounded on the first fire and died on November 9, 1827, eleven days later. (Margaret Ross, *Arkansas Gazette; The Early Years*, 82). Publisher Woodruff said of that year, "I cannot say that I was afraid of my life but [I] always went armed in those days."
- * Some classic names decorate the pages of the *Arkansas Gazette* in the early years of its existence. One of the best was *Hog in a Pen*, a Cherokee captured by Captain Nathaniel Robbins and a few others after the Indians stole some horses in the summer of 1820. However, while on his way to justice, *Hog in a Pen* was rescued by about 40 of his forces, assisted by a few Caddoes. (*Arkansas Gazette*, July 15, 1820, 3:1)
- * After the Treaty at Doak's Stand, the *Arkansas Gazette* had weekly letters protesting the terms. "One would have thought that the settlers in the above tract of country [Miller, Hempstead, Clark, Pulaski and Crawford Counties] had already experienced a full share of difficulty, in removing to, and establishing themselves in a wilderness; but it seems their troubles are only commencing." (*Arkansas Gazette*, January 6, 1821)
- * One description shows why the Red River settlers enjoyed their location. "It has been five years since the Reverend William Stevenson (long a successful preacher of the Methodists . . .) and a number of highly respectable farmers from Washington County, Missouri territory, moved to the country on the Red River above the Great Raft. . . The bottoms of Red River were found to be equal in extent and fertility, to those of any river of the size in America. . . The Red River lands are celebrated over the world, so far as the demand for the raw material of cotton extends. . ." (*Arkansas Gazette*, February 3, 1821, 1:2)
- * The entire Choctaw Treaty of 1820 can be read in the *Arkansas Gazette*, March 3, 1821, along with the signatures of nearly 100 participants.
- * Colleges were scarce in the United States in 1821. For instance, Transylvania College in Lexington, Kentucky had 13 on its faculty for 282 students. Yale had a student population of 319; Harvard, 286; Union, 264; Dartmouth, 222; and Princeton, 150. These were the top five northern colleges. (*Arkansas Gazette*, May 26, 1821, 3:1).
- * Occasionally Woodruff would print messages from Stephen F. Austin in Texas. "I am now this far on my journey to the Province of Texas, to take possession of the lands granted to my Father, Col. Moses Austin. . . IT (confirmation letter) contains permission to settle three hundred families on the lands. . ." (*Arkansas Gazette*, September 29, 1821, 3:1).
- * The *Gazette* lost one of its agents in Hempstead County when John English died. "Whilst engaged in tending his cotton gin, one of his hands was caught by the

machinery; in endeavoring to extricate it, the other was caught, and both drawn in. Before assistance could be rendered, his arms were mangled in a most shocking manner. He survived the unfortunate accident only a few hours." (*Arkansas Gazette*, December 12, 1821, 3:1).

- * Some never made it to the Red River area: "In the summer of 1817, William D. Craig, his wife and two children, left Virginia with an intention of going to Red river; on descending the river from Knoxville, after the birth of a third child, Mrs. Craig died." Determined to reach the Valley, Mr. Craig continued, "perhaps to the Arkansas Territory, and has since died himself," the bulletin by F.S. Heiskell, dated Knoxville, January 1, 1822, said. "It has been said the children are in Hempstead county. . . it is therefore hoped that should this appeal be noticed. . . that they will communicate it to the subscriber. . ." This was placed in the *Arkansas Gazette*, February 12, 1822, 3:4, four years after the death of Mr. Craig.
- * Many times courts were not held in Hempstead and Miller Counties because of inclement weather: "In consequence of heavy rains, and the consequent overflowing of the water courses, . . there will be no Circuit Court held. . . until the next term in court." (*Arkansas Gazette*, November 12, 1822, 3:1).
- * The mail schedule was thus: Leave Natchitoches on Sunday by 6 a.m., arrive at Clarke court-house on Friday by 6 p.m.; from Clarke court-house by Hempstead court-house, to Miller court-house, once in two weeks; leave Clarke court-house every Monday at 6 a.m. and arrive Miller court-house [no time given]. (*Arkansas Gazette*, November 26, 1822, 3:2).
- * A Statement of Expenditures and Receipts for Miller County, filed by John Clark, clerk, December 24, 1822, is in the *Gazette*, December 24, 1822, 3:4.
- * There were 91 slaves in Miller County in 1823, 516 in Hempstead County. (*Arkansas Gazette*, June 17, 1823, 3:4).
- * A list of tax delinquents for 1823 was filed by John H. Fowler, deputy for Claiborne Wright, Sheriff, Miller County. (*Arkansas Gazette*, November 25, 1823, 3:3).
- * Gilbert Clark was an heir of Luke Ward, according to an advertisement placed in the *Gazette*, September 14, 1824, 3:2. Rebecca was the widow. Ann, Gilbert's wife, was a daughter. Others listed in the estate were Nancy Belote (Mrs. George), Elizabeth, Clarissa, Rebecca, Jackson and Susan Ward. Four Negroes were to be sold.
- * Mad Buffalo, on trial for murder and depressed with the confinement in Little Rock, tried to take his life on Friday, October 21, 1824. He put the blade of a pen-knife to his body, but it was not long enough to inflict mortal wound. (*Arkansas Gazette*, October 26, 1824, 3:1)
- * Hopes were high that rumors the western boundary line of Arkansas would fall just three miles west of Cantonment Towson would be proven true by the survey party that left Cantonment Gibson in May, 1825. It would run from three miles east of the mouth of the "Kiamiche" on the Red River to the mouth of the Verdigris in the north. However, this would not be the final line. (*Arkansas Gazette*, May 10, 1825, 3:1)
- * Delegate to Congress Henry Conway wrote in the *Arkansas Gazette*, April 19, 1825, 3:2, that the effort was being put forth to "get something done about the Raft, but I fear the close of the session is so near, that my project will fail for want of time. . ."
- * The militia in Hempstead County, 1825, included several future Red River inhabitants such as Bailey English, Mathias Click and Isaac Sanders. (*Arkansas Gazette*, June 14, 1825, 1:2)
- * Jesse Cheek tried to plead his case, after smashing Captain RB. Hyde's cheek, by writing to the *Arkansas Gazette*, September 6, 1825, 3:2. He said, "In reply to the assertion, that I had left St. Louis with a considerable quantity of goods entrusted to my care, and never returned, it is sufficient to say, that the whole is an utter falsehood."
- * News from deep in Texas was more encouraging in 1825. A letter to Mr. Woodruff

said, "Judge Austin's colony was in a much more promising state than formerly. A considerable change has taken place, within the last year, in the character of the emigration to that colony. Many highly reputable and wealthy partners, mostly from South Alabama and Mississippi, were preparing to remove to that colony." (*Arkansas Gazette*, October 11, 1825, 3:1)

- * James S. Conway broke the news that his survey in 1825 would move the Choctaw boundary line much farther east than the once previously discussed. ". . . we are enabled to calculate very nearly the quantity of land now owned by the Choctaw nation of Indians, within the limits of our Territory, which, by calculation, does but exceed 3,484,800 acres," wrote Woodruff in the *Gazette*, December 20, 1825.
- * In the January 3, 1826 edition of the *Gazette*, page three, the eighth year of the paper is celebrated. It is also announced that Travis Wright and John H. Fowler are joint agents for the *Gazette*.
- * The summer of 1826 brought various news items in the *Gazette*, such as the death of William Rector, the man who surveyed Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas, of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, and, of course, the deaths of the Lawrence expedition. The James Fowler estate was also advertised in the July 25, 1826, 3:5, edition. The kinship with him and John H. is unknown.
- * John H. Fowler was busy placing notices for the Circuit Court of Miller County during January of 1826. In one, Martin and Fowler vs. Reuben McHaws, it was advertised that that defendant must attend the next meeting of the Court at the house of Clayborn Wright, on the first Wednesday after the fourth Monday in March. Judgment would be entered against him, and his estate to be sold to satisfy the debt. The other (both in the *Gazette* of January 3, 1826, 3:4) was the case of Henry Tollett and David Tollett, administrators of estate of John Tollett, vs. Symon Miller. It said Miller must also appear at the same Court and proceed to trial.
- * In the *Gazette* of September 12, 1826, it was announced that Governor George Izard's wife had died, and that James and Hannah Hanks were petitioning for a divorce.
- * Divorces were not uncommon! In the January 2, 1827, *Gazette* Sally and Isaac Pennington were petitioning for divorce in Conway County.
- * In the same issue, Clayborn Wright, Sheriff of Miller County, announced a \$100 reward for the deliver of Patrick Soye to him. Wright stated that Soye "was taken up in Miller County, with two other men, to wit: French Strother and John Brewer, and was taken before two Justices of the Peace--Strother was set at liberty by the court, and made good his escape to the province of Texas. Soye and Brewer were committed to the jail at Miller County." On the night of December 9, 1826, Soye escaped from the deputy sheriff. Wright believed those guarding Soye helped with the escape. Brewer was sent to St. Louis, escorted by James Hanks, where the prisoner would stand trial for a jail break. (*Arkansas Gazette*, January 2, 1827).
- * Mail to Miller County was always a coin toss. Weather, broken-down horses, stops along the way that were unscheduled--all made the arrival of the mail to the far outskirts of the Territory inconsistent. Woodruff summed it up in the January 23, 1827, 3:1, issue: "The postrider usually goes as far as Hempstead C.H. when, if he hears that the waters are high between that place and Miller C.H., he declines proceeding any farther, and returns to his residence. . ." Woodruff alluded to the postal regulations with contractors, saying a penalty should be imposed in all cases unless certificates could be produced to prove that delivery was unavoidable.
- * Justices of the Peace for Miller County, according to the *Arkansas Gazette*, November 6, 1827, 1:1, were: George F. Lawton, Pecan; Willis McCann, Pecan; George Holbrook, Clay; Jesse Shelton, Jefferson; and B.F. Owens, Jefferson.
- * News in the January 15, 1828, 3:1, issue of the *Gazette* announces that Captain R.B. Hyde has returned with his lady from New Hampshire and a road is being cut from Towson to Fort Smith. A week later, January 23, the *Gazette* reports A.H. Sevier has beaten Judge Richard Searcy for the Delegate position, to replace the dead Henry Conway.
- * Poly Lawrence, widow of Adam, filed an advertisement in the April 9, 1828, 3:5, edition asking that anyone having a demand upon the estate of her murdered

husband to file within the next year.

- * Isabella Hanks, administratrix of the estate of John Hanks, her former husband, filed a similar notice in the *Arkansas Gazette*, April 30, 1828, 4:4. In the same edition, column three, Woodruff announced the border, according to articles in the *Louisiana Advertiser*, between Mexico and the United States would fall at the Sabine instead of the Red River, which would leave Pecan Point in the Territory.
- * For nearly two years the kidnapped child of Benjamin Clark was lost. The suspect mysteriously drowned while Clark was bringing him back for trial, but no sign of the boy was found until RC. Oden recognized him. He was returned to the Clarks. (*Arkansas Gazette*, May 28, 1828, 3:2)
- * On June 11, 1828, 3:3, the *Gazette* announced that the Red River was the highest in memory, 6-7 feet over the recorded depth. Long Prairie was under water. The same issue, in 3:2, said John H. Fowler was once again Postmaster of Miller County, replacing George F. Lawton, who resigned.
 - * Probably indicating that he no longer considered himself in Arkansas, Fowler resigned his seat in the Legislative Council before the start of a special session in 1828. Daniel T. Witter of Hempstead, the head of the Council at the last session, found reason to resign, also. John Dunlap took Fowler's place. William Hickman was elected to be seated in Hempstead County. (*Arkansas Gazette*, August 20, 1828, 3:1)
- * George Wright says the settlers moved across the Red River at night to avoid the Indians in 1824 (Wright, *Visjt To Texas*, 7), but according to the *Arkansas Gazette* October 21, 1828, 3:1, the same thing happened that Fall. ". . . a large portion of the population of Miller county, south of the Red river, (including Jonesborough settlement, which is said to be entirely deserted), have removed across the river, and are now residing on this side." This happened after the two soldiers were murdered after they ventured from Cantonment Towson.



George W. Wright By Huddle

* The *Gazette* announced on May 30, 1828, 3:1, that General Sam Houston was in Little Rock, heading for the Arkansas frontier.

* Various marriages of note among the first settlers: Nancy Lawrence (Adam was her father) married William Stiles, Jr., brother of John, who had married Sarah King Reed, daughter of Joseph, in 1823. Sarah's mother, Mary Poly King, was an aunt to Daniel Boone. Nancy, a sister to William and John Stiles, married Henry Jones, co-founder of Jonesborough. (See "Fine Points Of History," *An Interview With Louise Juanita Stiles Bowling Cornwell of Clarksville*, (1980), East Texas State University Archives. Co-founder of Jonesborough, John Jones, married Hetty Stiles. William Ragsdale furnished wives for Mansel Mason, Jr., John Roberts, Adam Lawrence, Jr. and Andrew Rabb (See Strickland, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XVIII, No. 1, 20); William Rabb's daughter, Rachel, married Joseph Newman, and his son; John, married Mary Crownover, daughter of John, in 1820. The Rabbs, Crownovers and Newmans immigrated south in Texas before October of 1823. (*Ibid.*) Daniel Cornelius was married to Polly Hathorn, Henry Stout to Polly Talbert, Charles Burkham to Nancy Abbott and David Clapp was married to Elizabeth Lawrence. (*Ibid.*, 23). Joseph Watkins married Polly Miller. (*Ibid.*, 23)

* Thomas Williams was the father-in-law of Robert Kuykendall, who probably never was a resident of Miller County but a hunter with William English and others at the mouth of the Verdigris River in October 1812. Robert, Abner and Joseph Kuykendall were the first three settlers in Austin's colony in 1821. (*Ibid.*, 24).

* Nathaniel Robbins and John Humphreys brought their families to Pecan Point together in 1818. Nathaniel had four sons--William, George, John and Joshua--and four daughters. Robbins had married Cynthia Humphreys. He probably came to the area in the summer of 1817 to spot a home. One of the Humphreys daughters married John Robbins. (*Ibid.*) .

- * Joseph English (English) came from English's Station, a place established by his father, Charles, near the famous Crab Orchard in Kentucky. George Wright's father-in-law, James Holman and his father John Holman, came from that area of the country also. (*Ibid.*, 25, and *Steely Papers*, Holman Files). William English, son of Joseph, married Annie Shelton and a sister of William English married Martin Varner. Note: check these marriages carefully.
- * One of the earliest documents preserved proving Claiborne Wright's work as a Hempstead County Justice of the Peace is an inventory of the estate of Benjamin Cuthbert, January 13, 1820, sworn to by George Dooley, Thomas Denton and Asa Blankenship. Wright was JP for Pecan Township, Territory of Arkansas, at that time. (Hempstead County, *Court Record A.*, Strickland, *Chronicles*, X V 111, No.1, 31).
- * William B. Dewees, from the Duck River area of Tennessee, came to Pecan Point in the spring of 1819 with a party of 10 families of kinsmen and neighbors. They were probably Jesse Burnam, who later moved to Austin's Colony, Dewees' brother-in-law Samuel Burnam, John Nail, George Dooley and Willis W. Boone. This information is in the *Registro* of Wavell's Colony. Dr. Strickland speculates that the others in this party might have been Benjamin Cuthbert, Asa Blankenship, Thomas Denton, originally from Kentucky, John Crownover and John Clark. (*Ibid.*, 33). They came by keelboat.
- * Hall and Porter, after their trek through the prairies with no clothes, thanks to the exploits of Mad Buffalo, were administered to by the post surgeon at Cantonment Towson, Dr. John Thurston. (*Ibid.*, XIX, No.1, 46.)
- * J.W.G. Pierson was not killed as thought with the Luke Roberts party. Apparently his wife, the daughter of Isaac Pennington, had died earlier. They had three daughters and two were alive much later than April of 1827. Pierson was married by John H. Fowler in 1826 to Elizabeth Montgomery. (See *Arkansas Gazette*, January 3, 1826, 3:1.) Pierson headed south sometime after 1829, participated in the revolt against Mexico, took part in the Mier Expedition of 1842, was imprisoned in Mexico until 1844, and returned to his home in Robertson [present Grimes] County, Texas, where he died April 9, 1849. (Strickland, *Chronicles*, XIX, No. 1, 47.)
- * The clerk of the estate sale for Clayborn Wright, N.G. Crittenden, certified a true list of items and costs on September 11, 1830. The total of the goods sold, mostly to family, was \$567.42. Rolin Brown; Crittenden; Travis, William, Harriet, George, Alexander and Marley Wright; John Robbins; William McAtee; Isaac Clover; and John Fowler purchased Wright's possessions. (*G. T. Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies, (*Steely Papers*), 8).
- * A note in the *Wright Papers* dated August 7, 1828, says "there is a joint land grant owned by Clayborn Wright and Chester Ashley, the one aluded to in the text. Half of this land--284.40 acres--was claimed by the heirs of Clayborn Wright and admitted in the Patent Office at Little Rock, Arkansas," according to a letter to T.G. Wright on February 13, 1850. (*Ibid.*, 11)
- * In 1813, Samuel A. Edmundson, a courier for Andrew Jackson, came over the Indian Trail to Pitchlynn's settlement at Plymouth Bluff, bringing tragic news of the massacre of 517 white people by the Creek Indians. He was assisted along his route by friendly whites and Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians. They furnished him with fresh horses. When he came to "Peachlands," Major John Pitchlynn provided him with a horse to continue on to Nashville. (*Lowndes County, Source Material For Mississippi*, XLIV, Pt. 1)
- * Notations from Miller County Court Records, located in the *Wright Papers*, Barker Archives, Austin, Texas: [See some 2,000 such more documents copied from originals and available to research at Texas A&M-Commerce Gee Archives]
- On October 19, 1830, George F. Lawton was appointed [deputy] Sheriff of Miller County.
- April 1, 1833 was the date filed naming Poly W. to administer the estate of George C. Witmore (sic).
- Notations from Miller County Circuit Court Records, found in Austin:

-Miller County Circuit Court began its meetings at Charles Burkham's house on Monday, October 4, 1830.

-Sheriff James E. Hopkins appointed Lawton as deputy sheriff at that meeting.

-By the next meeting, Richard M. Hopkins was sheriff (1831), Hon. Edward Cross was the judge.

-On April, 22, 1833, court was held for the first time at Jonesborough, Cross presiding.

-The 1833 court refused to award Mary Hays a divorce from John Hays, and even charged her to pay the court costs!

-The 1833 court heard the case of the Arkansas Territory v. Clayburn Wright for taxes (1829) due and not sent in. These were apparently taxes he collected from settlers, as well as his own. There is no further explanation on the matter in the records found.



This is either Claiborne Wright or Claiborne Chisum.
It comes from a tintype, so most likely is Chisum.
Sketch by Jane Steely

-The 1834 court at Jonesborough heard a case of Administrator of Claybourne Wright (William McAtee) vs. the *Arkansas Gazette* for unduly publishing matters not completed by witnesses in the Court. The Clerk (Bradford Fowler) was ordered to give a copy of the proceedings to the Administrator, who was not present at the time. Grandison Royston of Hempstead County was prosecuting attorney.

-in the October 1834 court, Travis G. Wright's deposition said Claiborne Wright owed Miller County \$669, and the sum would be paid by Administrators, William and Harriet W. McAtee. (See complete deposition on page 9, *Steely Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies of the G. T. Wright Papers)

* Family lore said for years that William Barrett Travis was a brother to Elizabeth Travis Wright, and that when Col. Travis left Alabama he was headed "to join relatives in Texas." (*Edna Steely Papers*, Notes, 2) The best of research has found no connection other than the fact that Travis' daughter and Henrietta Martin

⁵¹⁷ Another example of the dual allegiance was when George W. Wright served as a representative in the first session of the Congress of the Republic of Texas, while Travis George Wright, his brother, served as Miller County's representative in the Arkansas Constitutional Convention. See *Steely Papers*, Travis Wright File, letter of payment for expenses of \$92.40, approved by John Wilson, president of the convention. A.W. Neville, *History Of Lamar County* (Paris, 1937), 243. See more and exact dates in various places in Steely, *Forty Seven Years*.

⁵¹⁸ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 169.

⁵¹⁹ *Arkansas Gazette*, November 17, 1830, 3:1.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, November 3, 1830, 3:1.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, February 23, 1830, 3:5.

⁵²³ Clarence E. Carter (ed), *Territorial Papers Of The United States, Territory Of Arkansas*, XIX (Washington, 1940), 819.

⁵²⁴ Some notes say November 17, some also the 21st.

⁵²⁵ William Speer (ed), *Encyclopedia Of The New West* (Marshall, Texas, 1881), 80. Found in the Sam Bell Maxey Home, Paris, Texas. The copy belonged to Sam Johnstone Wright, son of Travis. Someone has written in pencil in the margin of this copy that Claiborne died as a result of this altercation. The story, in complete detail, has been lost by time.

⁵²⁶ McAtee married Harriet Wright in 1832, according to *Mary Daniel Papers*, Genealogical Notes, 15. MVD says the pair had no issue, but the 1840 Hempstead County, Arkansas Census lists one child 0-5, two children (males) 5-10, one 10-15, one 15-20, and one female child, 0-5. McAtee was listed to have 23 slaves at the time. Harriet and William McAtee were still in Hempstead County as late as 1856. See Hempstead County *Deed Book N-52*. See more on the couple and their children in Steely, *Forty Seven Years*.

⁵²⁷ *Arkansas Gazette*, November 10, 1830, 3:1. Partly because Sevier County took a portion of Miller County's population, and partly because many had moved, the population of Miller in 1830 was 358.

⁵²⁸ *George Travis Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies (*Steely Papers*), 10. These are the same Negroes that accompanied the Wrights to Texas. See chapter one. Hardy later was Henrietta's property, and later set free and given his own land.

⁵²⁹ Strickland, *Anglo-American Activities*, 173. A year after it was located at Martin's, the General Assembly moved it to the home of Charles Burkham on Mill Creek. But, it was recognized a that permanent seat was necessary so Burkham, James J. Ward, Sr., and William Collum formed the Commission to select the most appropriate place. Two years later, in 1831, they still had not found a location. Another act was passed to permanently locate the seat of justice. This time the committee was Collum, Burkham, Travis G. Wright, George C. Wetmore and Samuel D. Worthington. On October 23, 1832, the commission reported to Judge Thomas P. Eskridge that they proposed Jonesborough, and had a house already prepared for the reception of the court. A copy of this report is in the *George Travis Wright Papers*, Ione Lewis Copies, (*Steely papers*), 31.

Bason's daughter had the same name--Rosa.

- * Although there are few local history documents to study in Carthage, Tennessee, the late Rev. R.D. Brooks provided evidence that there were two Claiborne Wrights in town. Robert Wright, born 1759, died 1831, had five sons--Robert Greene, George T., Claiborne, William Dixon and John J.--and one daughter, Nancy. According to a speech given in 1939 by William Russell Wright of Hartsville, Tennessee, it is not known when Robert came to Tennessee, but he said that Greene and George Wright came to Carthage in 1818. He thought that the transactions in the court house as early as 1808 belonged to Robert's Claiborne, not William's. However, Robert's Claiborne was a Baptist minister, lived in Rome, Georgia later and moved to Alabama eventually. Rev. Brooks descends from Greene. William Russell Wright descends from George T. There is no evidence that the two Claiborne's were close kin. (*Steely Papers*, Kentucky-Tennessee-Illinois-Indiana Research).
- * According to a letter by Mary Eakin Dawson to Dr. Rex W. Strickland, March 9, 1944, Goodspeed's *Memoirs Of Southern Arkansas, 1890, 378*, gives settlers in that Hempstead County area and their dates of arrival. For example, Edward Johnson, Betsey Alexander Fowler's father, lived at Columbus, or Mound Prairie. The Mosses--James, William and Mathew--are credited with bringing the first keel boat up around the Raft. They did this in 1814, says Goodspeed, and settled between Washington and Mound Prairie, Arkansas.
- * A document called, *Articles Of Agreement* (or Compact Of Government), was entered into by the settlers of the Cumberland River, Tennessee, on May 1, 1780. Numerous names on it are the same that later settled in Southwest Arkansas. For example: Thomas Denton, Joseph Reed, Nicholas Trammell and William Morris. Many last names are the same as those early Arkansas settlers. (*Steely Papers*, El Paso Trip Research File)
- * Stephen F. Austin was still legally involved in Hempstead County as late as August 1820. A document, Stephen F. Austin v. Hugh Bradley, was uncovered in research with Dr. Rex Strickland, and given to the Washington, Arkansas Archives (SARA). It told that a decision was granted to Austin, and damages of \$2,000 were to be paid to him by Bradley, if he could be found and returned to the court "to be holden at the house of John English . . . on the fourth Monday in August." (*Steely Papers*, Hempstead County Documents File)
- * The "Gilliland Settlement" mentioned in the book was most likely named after Daniel Gilliland, who accompanied Robert Kuykendall to the Austin Colony. The

⁵³⁰ Neville, *History Of Lamar County*, 237 and 242. Houston came into Texas at Jonesborough in 1832, Crockett in 1835.

⁵³¹ *Steely Papers*, George Wright files, letter certifying George served in Captain John Hart's company of Mounted Men from Red River and was elected first sergeant. He entered July 3 and was discharged on December 12, 1836. Neville, *History of Lamar County*, 243. Neville says George was first lieutenant. Bradford Fowler, George's cousin, was also in that company. Wright took his wife and two children to Arkansas, left them with her father, and joined Houston's army. They apparently reached the army too late for the San Jacinto battle, but served Houston by riding with the troops escorting the Mexicans out of Texas. See George W. Wright, *Visit Through Texas*, 1817 (George Wright's *Memoirs*), unpublished account of life in or near Pecan Point from 1817 through late 1830's, starting on page 66 of the original typed version. See Steely's footnoted version for more.

⁵³² *Arkansas Gazette*, July 15, 1829, 3:1. Troops left Cantonment Towson on June 18, 1829. Soon afterwards, "... a number of desparate villians, in a frolic, set fire to the Barracks at Cantonment Towson, and burnt them to the ground. The destruction, we understand, was complete. . ." *Arkansas Gazette*, November 18, 1828, 1:2. Sevier County had been created and George Wright's future father-in-law James Holman, Joseph Ladd, George T. Boring, David Clark and Levi Davis were appointed commissioners to locate the seat of justice.

⁵³³ Colonel John S. Ford, *Origin And Fall Of The Alamo*. (San Antonio, 1895), 38. This particular Claiborne Wright was from North Carolina and was 24 at the time of his death. He was a private in the Gonzales contingent. Even in 2007 no connection between him and the Red River Claiborne Wright has been found. However, some sources say his father was named James.

book by Worth S. Ray, *Austin Colony Pioneers*, (Copy found in Odessa library), tells about the pioneers who left Miller County, Arkansas and joined Austin. For instance, it clears up much genealogical information that has been fuzzy, like the Kuykendalls' relationship to Miller County settlers such as Thomas Williams and Amos Gates. Thomas Williams was married to the widow Nancy Gilleland, and was step-father to Sarah Kuykendall.

* *Sibley's Diary*, according to Dr. Strickland, says in 1811 there was a collection of bad men and women on the Red River--about 20. At Pecan Point on December 31, 1811 were these: Glover, O'Reilly Cotton, Parkham, Robert Armstrong, John Coats, Harper, Fitz Gibbons, Kelly, Fouts, Turner, Rogers, Patton, Lucas, "Bob" Williams, Dixon, Knowlton, Speers and some runaway slaves. Apparently, these were gone by later in 1812.

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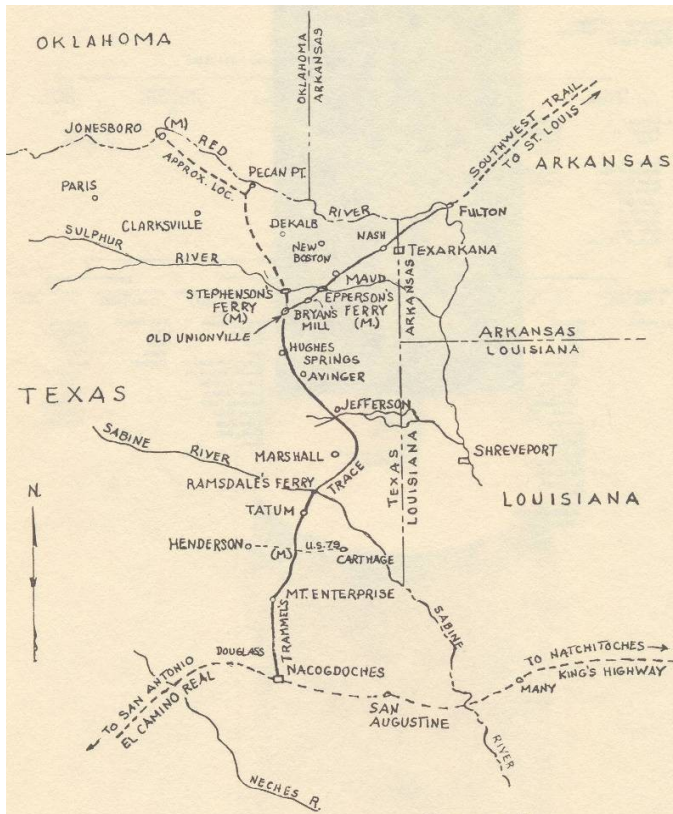
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* According to Rev. RD. Brooks of Carthage, Tennessee, Sheriff Lee Sullivan of Smith County, Tennessee, in 1820, sold the old Sullivan place to "old" Isham Beasley (1760-1855). Beasley had arrived in Smith County in November of 1798, about the time Godfrey Fowler settled west of present-day Carthage. In fact, Beasley's land was originally not too far from the Fowler's location. In 1820, Beasley left his "Beasley's Bend" property and moved east of Carthage to the Sullivan land, which, according to Rev. Brooks, was on a portion of Claiborne Wright's old property on the Cumberland River. One of Beasley's eight sons, William, left \$5,000 for a huge statue of Isham to be erected on the Sullivan property. "People from all over go to this place to see Isham Beasley's monument," says Rev. Brooks. Beasley had 55 slaves and 16 children when he died at the age of 95. He had married Polly Andrews. (*Steely Papers*, Kentucky-Tennessee-Illinois-Indiana Research).

* James Garner was born in Maryland ca. 1750. His brother Bradley's son, Thomas Jefferson Garner, was wounded at San Jacinto in 1836. His sister, Lucy, married William Hillhouse of South Carolina. Garner's niece, Margaret, married John Bowman. Judge Bowman died probably in Miller County, or possibly Shelby County, trying to pen wild horses. Garner was black eyed, red-haired, and about 6'-4."



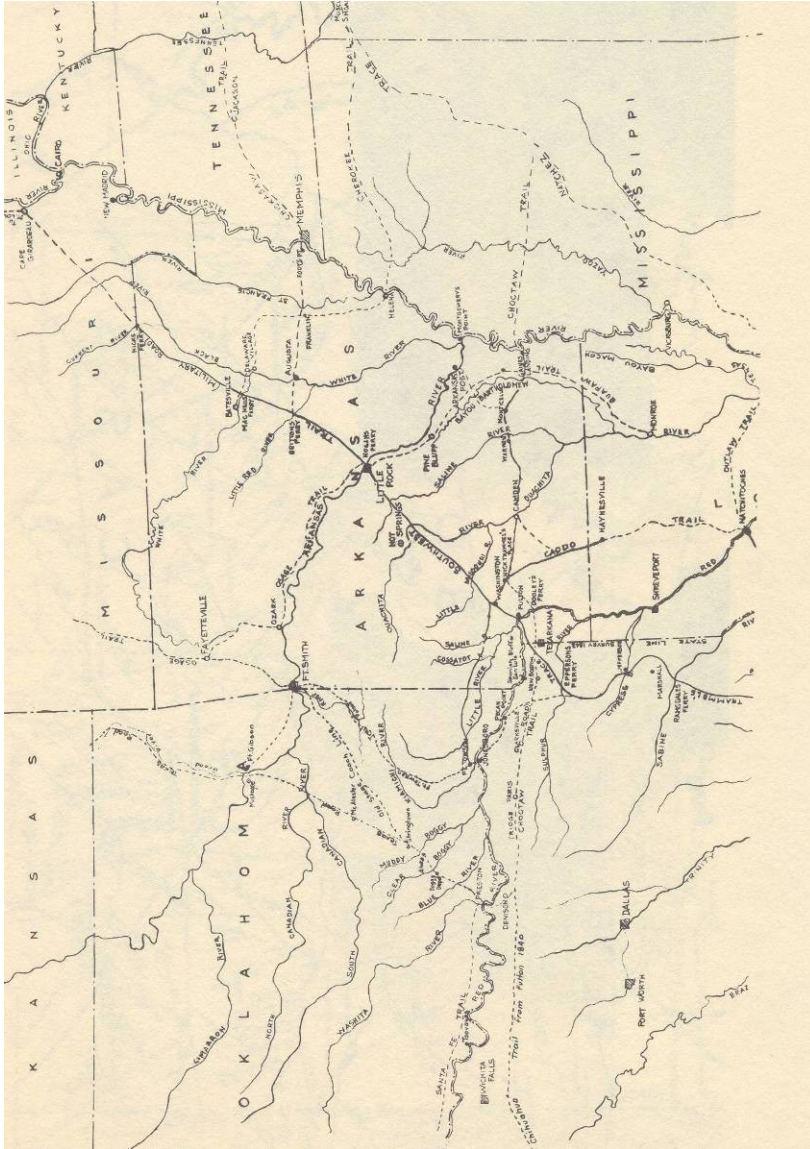
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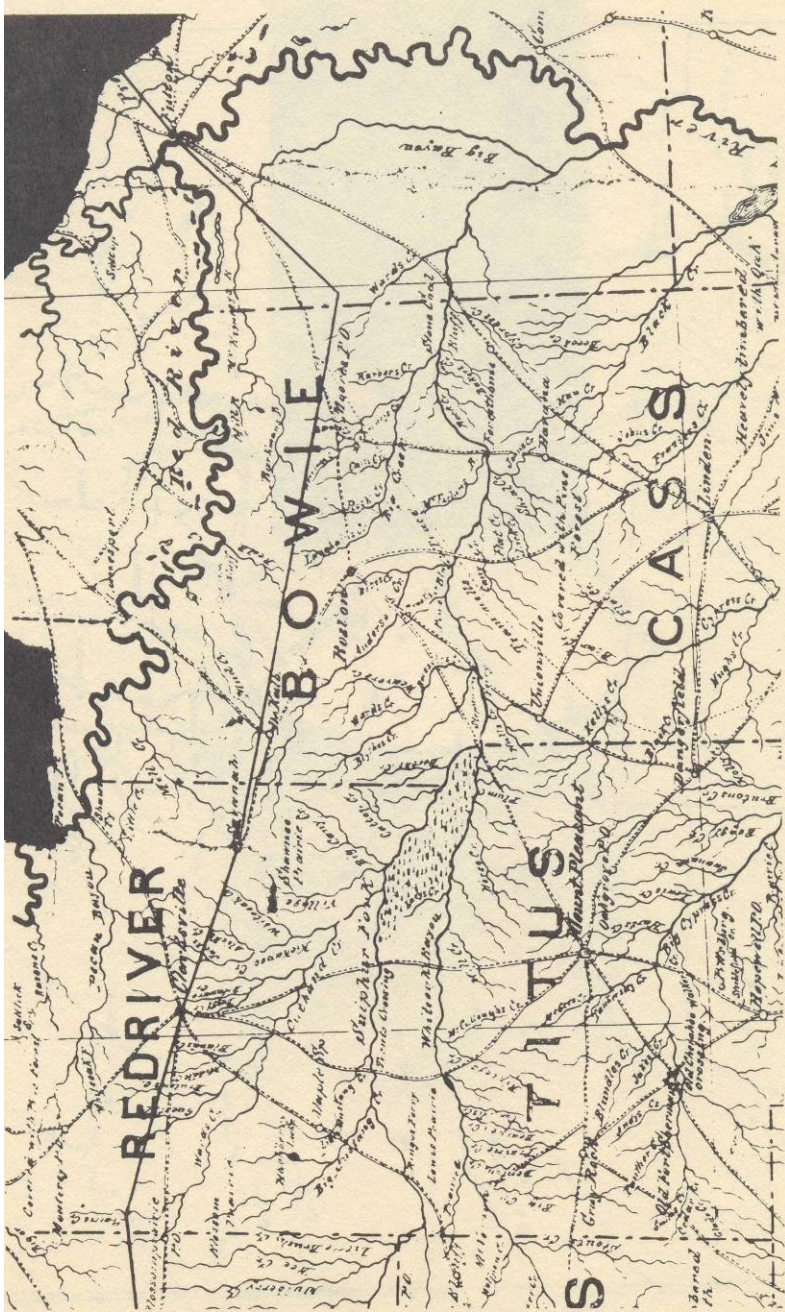
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Endnotes